

Indeed there were all kinds of goodies in those boxes.
(See Page 207)

SUNNY BOY IN THE COUNTRY

Received from
READER'S SERVICE
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BY
RAMY ALLISON WHITE

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHARLES L. WRENN



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SUNNY BOY SERIES

By RAMY ALLISON WHITE

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SUNNY BOY IN THE COUNTRY
SUNNY BOY AT THE SEASHORE
SUNNY BOY IN THE BIG CITY

NEW YORK

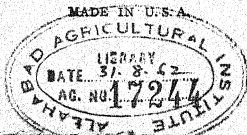
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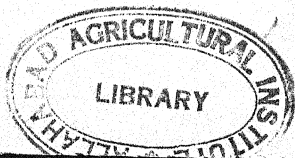
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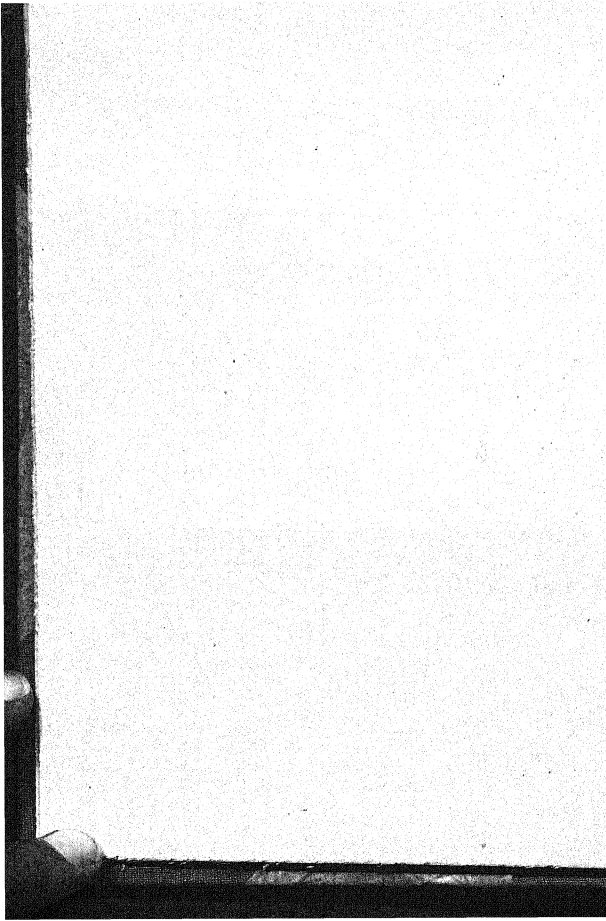


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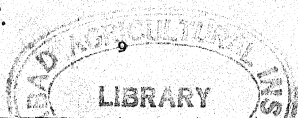
CHAPTER I

THE MENDED DRUM

RUB-A-DUB, dub! Bang! Rub-a-dub-dub—Bang! Bang!" Sunny Boy thumped his drum vigorously.

Usually when he made such a racket some one would come out and ask him what in the world was he making a noise like that for, but this morning every one seemed to be very busy. For several minutes now Sunny Boy had been trying to attract Harriet's attention. She was doing something to the front door.

"I spect she needs me," said Sunny Boy to himself.



There were any number of interesting things going on around the front door this morning, but he was chiefly interested in Harriet, because as a rule he had to help her Saturday mornings by going with her to the grocery store at the corner. He liked to stand in her clean, comfortable kitchen and drum for her until she was ready to start.

This particular morning Harriet's mind seemed to be far away from music. She was rubbing briskly as Sunny Boy watched her, polishing—that was it: she was shining the brass numbers on the door—266. Sunny Boy knew them, and how careful Harriet was to keep them always bright.

“Just think,” she would say, as they might be coming up the steps; “suppose the postman had a letter for 266 Glenn Avenue, and the numbers were so dull and streaked he couldn't read them! Think how we'd feel if that should happen to us!”

Sunny Boy was sure such a thing could

never happen, not with Harriet rubbing away at the numbers morning after morning.

From his post at the head of the stairs he could see a man on a step-ladder, working and whistling. He was hammering in nails over the door. Dimly Sunny Boy made out another pair of doors standing in the hall.

"Goodness, Sunny Boy, I nearly fell over you!" Aunt Bessie kissed him on the back of his neck before he could turn round. That was a trick Aunt Bessie had, and Sunny Boy was used to it. "Are you watching them put up the screens and awnings?"

"Are they?" asked Sunny interestedly. "Could I hold the awning? Maybe the man would like my tool-chest—it's all there but the hammer. I lost that in the park. Can I help, Auntie?"

Aunt Bessie was going downtown, and she was in a hurry. "If you don't get in the way, I daresay they'll be glad to have you," she said kindly, and brushed by him, on

down the stairs. She stopped to speak to some one in the parlor, and then Sunny Boy saw her go out and down the steps.

Sunny Boy sat down on the top stair and took his drum in his lap. Presently he would go down and help the awning man, but it was very pleasant where he was. The softest little May breeze came wandering through the open door up to him, and the canary in the dining room was singing his cheerful loudest. Sunny Boy leaned his curly head against the bannister to listen.

His real name, of course, was not Sunny Boy—oh, no, he was named for his grandpa, and when the postman brought him an invitation to a birthday party you might see it written out—Arthur Bradford Horton.

But birthday parties happen only once in a while, and Daddy and Mother called him Sunny Boy because he was nearly always cheerful. As Mother explained, you can't depend on a party happening to cheer you

up, so to know a little boy who is sure to smile every day—well, that is worth while. And often Sunny forgot that he had any other name.

Bump—bang—bumpty, bang! Down the stairs suddenly rolled the drum, making a fearful racket on the steps as it bounded from side to side. Down the stairs it rolled, across the narrow strip of hall, past Harriet, now on her knees scrubbing the green and white tiles, under the ladder of the awning man, down the steps, and right out into the street! After it scrambled Sunny Boy, as fast as his tan sandals would take him. He was just in time to see his drum roll to the middle of the street and stop in the center of the heavy traffic. A big furniture van, drawn by three horses, was headed right for it.

"It'll be smashed! Oh, oh!" Sunny Boy wailed, hopping up and down on the curb, but remembering even in his excitement that



he had promised not to go off the pavement when alone. "They'll ride right over my drum!"

"I guess not!" cried a tall man, and darted out from behind Sunny. He rushed to where the drum lay and snatched it up, almost from under the horses' feet.

The colored man driving the furniture van grinned.

"Most busted dat drum for sure!" he shouted. "If this off horse, Billy, ever put his foot through it, good-by drum!"

"And there you are!" The tall man gave Sunny Boy back his drum with a flourish. "Just as good as new, except for a little hole that I'm willing to bet a cookie your mother can mend for you. Isn't she waving for you to come in? I thought so. You run along now, and see if she doesn't mend it."

Mother was on the front steps watching for him. Sunny thanked the tall man, who said that it was nothing, nothing at all: he'd

never rescued a drum before, but he was glad to have the experience, and that things always turned out well for small boys who stayed on the sidewalks and didn't dash out into the streets to get run over. Then Sunny climbed up the steps and held out his drum for Mother to see.

"The man said you could mend it," he said wistfully. "Can you, Mother? 'Cause when things break, I miss 'em."

Mrs. Horton managed to hug her son, drum and all, though there really wasn't much space where they stood. She was under the awning man's ladder, and he was shaking and moving the large awning about. Inside the door stood Harriet and her brush and bucket.

"So, 'twas the drum!" smiled Harriet. "I couldn't see what it was went rolling by me like lightning, and Sunny Boy tearing after it. All I heard was a noise like thunder."

"We'll go up to my room and mend the drum," declared Mrs. Horton. "Tell Mr. Bray I'll telephone him about the slip-covers, please, Harriet. I left him in the parlor when I ran out to see what was happening to Sunny Boy."

"What," demanded Sunny Boy, carrying his drum upstairs—and you may be sure that he gripped it tightly this time—"What are slip covers, Mother?"

Mrs. Horton laughed.

"Why, slip-covers are—" She thought a minute. "They are covers for the chairs and sofas to wear in summer," she explained. "Nice, cool, linen covers, you know, for the furniture, just as you have summer suits."

Sunny Boy understood. He usually did when Mother answered his questions. And he was very sure that she could mend his drum.

"Do you know," said Mrs. Horton, when

she had looked at the hole, "I think, Sunny Boy, we can mend this nicely with court-plaster?"

"Court-plaster?" echoed Sunny Boy.

"I have some in the medicine closet in the bathroom," went on Mrs. Horton, drawing the edges of the hole together as she talked. "I'll get it, dear."

"It's like mending fingers, isn't it, Mother?" Sunny Boy was so anxious to watch how Mother mended the drum that he nearly put his own pink nose in the hole. "When Daddy cut his finger he put court-plaster on it. He said the skin would grow together, and it did—when he took it off, there wasn't any cut there. Just nothing. Will my drum be like that?"

"No, precious," answered Mother, snipping around the edges of the court-plaster with the fascinating sharp shears Sunny Boy was forbidden to touch. "A drum, you know, isn't like a person's skin. It can't

grow. But I think that if you remember to be careful the drum will last a long time. There you are. My goodness! it makes as much noise as ever, doesn't it?" and Mrs. Horton covered her ears and laughed as Sunny Boy beat merrily on his mended drum.

"Letters!" he cried a minute later as a shrill whistle sounded. "I'll get 'em for you, Mother," and downstairs again he tumbled. Only he left the drum safely on Mother's bed.

"Two—three—ever so many," he announced proudly when he came back. "Are there any for me, Mother?"

Like some other little folk, Sunny Boy was always expecting letters, though he almost never wrote any. But he meant to write a great many as soon as he learned to write with ink, and he was even now learning to print nicely.

"None for you," answered Mrs. Horton.

glancing at the envelopes. "However, here is one with something in it for you, I suspect. Grandpa Horton has written to us."

As Mother opened this letter, a little note fell out. That was from Grandpa Horton to Sunny Boy. He liked to put a little letter inside his large one, just for his grandson. Sunny waited quietly while Mother read her letter. When she had read it through, she folded it and put it back in the envelope.

"Sunny Boy," she said, and her voice made him think of the "laughing piece" she sometimes played for him on the piano. He looked at her and her eyes were dancing. "Sunny Boy," she said again, "what do you think? We're going to visit Grandpa Horton on his farm—going to make him a nice long visit and see the real country."

"Oh, goody!" cried Sunny Boy. "Is Daddy going?"

"He'll come to see us," promised Mother. "Let me read you what Grandpa has written you, dear."

Grandpa Horton's note to Sunny told him he was depending on him to help him with the early haying.

"Wasn't it lucky Harriet rubbed the numbers on the front door this morning?" chuckled Sunny Boy. "S'posing we didn't get this letter? Where's Brookside, Mother?"

Brookside was the name of Grandpa's farm. Mrs. Horton explained that it was many miles away from the city, and that it would take them nearly a day on the train to get there.

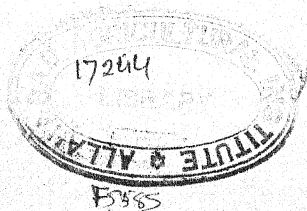
"And if Daddy cannot go with us, you'll have to take care of me," she said seriously.

"All right, I will," promised Sunny Boy. "I'll have to go and tell Harriet an' show her my letter. I'll tell the awning man, too. I was going to help him, but I don't feel help-

ing, somehow. I feel wiggled up, you know, Mother."

"You're excited," said Mrs. Horton. "Well, we don't go for two weeks, dear, so you'll have plenty of time to talk about it. I must write to Grandpa as soon as Daddy comes home."

Dashing out of the room went Sunny Boy, crying the good news at the top of his lungs — "We're going to the country! We're going to my Grandpa's farm! Hurrah!"



CHAPTER II

SPREADING THE NEWS

“SO you’re going off to the country?” said Daddy, as he came whistling down to the dining room, where Mother and Sunny Boy were waiting for him. “Well, I see that I’ll have to come up and teach you how to catch a brook trout.”

“Did Mother tell you?” asked Sunny Boy, as Daddy swung him into his chair and Harriet brought in the soup to Mrs. Horton. “When did you find out, Daddy? I was watching for you so’s I could tell.”

“I didn’t see any little chap in the hall, so I went right upstairs and found Mother. She said you were going to Brookside, and that the awnings were up, and the screens in, and she hoped to go downtown to-morrow

and buy your best shoes," and Daddy looked at Mother and laughed.

"Daddy is teasing me," smiled Mrs. Horton. "We have to tell him our news all in one breath because we see so little of him, don't we, Sunny Boy? I do hope, Harry, that you'll be able to come up this summer and spend a real vacation at your father's."

Mr. Horton was making a little well in the mashed potato on Sunny's plate, and flooding it with the rich brown gravy. That was the way *his* father had fixed his mashed potato for him when he was a little boy, and Sunny Boy liked his that way, too.

"Oh, I'll come up," promised Mr. Horton, passing the potato to Sunny Boy. "I'll have to come and show you both where I had my garden and teach Sunny how to fool the wise fish."

Sunny Boy put down his fork. He had to wait a minute because his mouth was full and Mother had her own opinion of a little

boy who spoke without chewing his food properly and swallowing it. Having swallowed his potato, Sunny Boy was ready to speak.

"Oh, Daddy!" he began eagerly, "were you ever at Brookside? Where was your garden? Could I drive horses?"

Then Daddy and Mother said the same thing together, both at once, just as if they were thinking the same thing, as they probably were:

"Why, Sunny Boy!" said Daddy and Mother.

"You can't have forgotten," urged Mrs. Horton, then. "Brookside, you know, dear, is where Daddy lived when he was a little boy. When he was just as old as you are now he used to play there were Indians in the woods. I've told you ever so many times, and now you are going to see the place yourself where Daddy was a little lad like you."

"Oh!" said Sunny Boy again.

All during the rest of the dinner he was very busy, thinking. He had forgotten that Daddy had lived at Brookside, or, to be more exact, he had not understood that Grandpa's farm was the same farm on which Daddy had been a little boy. Sunny Boy was only five years old, and he had already moved three times. One lived a long time on a farm it seemed.

Soon after dinner came bed for Sunny Boy, and he dreamed that he had fallen head-first into his drum and that it was very hot and dark inside. He was kicking madly to get out, when Mother came in and found him all wrapped up in the bed-clothes with his head buried in the pillows. When she drew down the covers he woke up, and after she had tucked him in smoothly again and brought him a drink of cool water, he went to sleep. And the next thing that happened was the morning.



After breakfast, Sunny Boy went out into the back yard to play. It wasn't a very large back yard, but it was pretty. There were ferns along one side, and gay spring flowers on the other. At one end were Sunny Boy's swing and sand-box, and the center was in thick, green grass. Mondays the grass belonged to Harriet, who used it to walk on when she hung out the clean clothes, but other days Sunny had the whole yard pretty much to himself.

There was a little gate cut in the fence on one side of the yard. Daddy Horton had made the gate for Sunny Boy and Nelson and Ruth. Nelson and Ruth were a little boy and girl who lived next door, at least Ruth was a little girl—she was only four years old—but Nelson was seven and went to school. Their last name was Baker, and they and Sunny Boy had very good times playing together.

As soon as Sunny Boy came out into his

yard this morning, the little gate opened, and in came Ruth, dragging Paulina, her largest doll, by one arm.

"Don't be cross," begged Sunny Boy. "I want to tell you something."

"I'm not cross," said Ruth with dignity. "What made you think I was going to be?"

"'Cause you're dragging Paulina and you always treat her like that when you're cross," answered Sunny more frankly than tactfully. "Listen, Ruth—we're going to the country to see Grandpa Horton, and I'm going to drive horses and go fishing, an' help hay, and oh, everything!"

Ruth was interested.

"Can I go fishing?" she wanted to know.

Sunny Boy was troubled. Evidently Ruth thought she was going to the country, too, and it surely wouldn't be very kind to tell her plainly that Grandpa Horton hadn't invited her. To his relief Mrs. Baker called Ruth just then and she went into her own

yard, still dragging the unfortunate Paulina by one arm.

"Sunny Boy," called his own mother from an upstairs window, "Harriet is going to the store for me—wouldn't you like to go with her?"

Sunny Boy liked to go with Harriet, and he hurried indoors to get his hat and roller skates. Now Sunny Boy was just learning to skate, and if he didn't have Harriet to hold on to he never could be quite sure what was going to happen to him. He could go much faster on his own two feet, but, as he explained to Harriet, it was most important that he should learn how to skate because when he could skate well he would be able to go to the store much more quickly than he could walk. And Harriet said yes, she understood, and that everybody had to learn how to skate before they could become really expert.

"Did you ever live on a farm, Harriet?"

asked Sunny Boy, as they started for the store. His mind was full of the coming visit.

"No," admitted Harriet. "I never lived on a farm. But I've often visited people who did. You'll like it. There'll be brooks to wade in, and little calves and lambs to play with, and chickens and ducks. And you can play outdoors all day long."

"When it rains?" asked Sunny Boy.

"When it rains there'll be the barn and the haymow," answered Harriet. "And now here's Mr. Gray's. You'd better wait out here for me and not try to clatter in with those skates."

Sunny Boy saw a basket of apples in the window.

"Will you bring me an apple, Harriet?" he teased. "Mother won't mind. Apples don't hurt you."

Harriet was half way through the door, but she turned.



"It's too early for good apples yet," she said. "You wait till you get to Brookside, Sunny. You'll have more apples than than you can possibly eat."

"Millions and dozens?" called Sunny Boy after Harriet.

"Yes, 'millions and dozens,' " she echoed, laughing, and closed the grocery store door.

The grocer's boy was coming down the steps, and he laughed, too.

"Millions and dozens of what?" he demanded, stopping before Sunny Boy.

"Apples, at my grandpa's farm."

The grocer boy had a basket on his arm and he wore a white coat. He looked very clean and cheerful. Sunny Boy had a sudden idea.

"If you're going up to our house, could I hang on back of your wheel?" he said. "I can skate pretty well if I have some one to steer with."

"I don't think Harriet would like it," was

the grocer boy's reply. He knew Sunny Boy and Harriet because he often came to their house to bring good things to eat. "I'll tell you, Sunny Boy—you wait till you come back from this visit, and then I'll take you. Or perhaps after you've eaten the millions and dozens of apples you won't have to hang on to any one—you'll be big and strong and able to skate by yourself."

Sunny Boy watched him ride merrily off on his bicycle. Still Harriet didn't come. Sunny suspected there must be a good many people waiting in the store. He might skate down to the corner and back before she had bought all the things on Mother's list.

It was all very well for the first few yards, because there was a convenient iron railing to cling to, and Sunny Boy found himself skating very easily. But the iron railing ended in a stone stoop, and after that there seemed to be nothing but miles and miles of pavement without even a friendly tree to

cling to. Sunny Boy's feet began to behave queerly. One went much faster than the other and in an entirely different direction, and he had an idea he'd have to wear those skates the rest of his life because he didn't see how he was ever going to stop to take them off.

Suddenly he found himself headed for an area-way and a flight of stone steps. He clutched desperately at the cellar window, shot past, and down the steps—bing! into a huge basket of clothes a fat colored woman was bringing up. She was as wide as the basket and the basket took up about all the area-way.

"Land sakes, chile!" she said, as Sunny Boy landed on top of her basket. "Where you goin'?"

"Skating," said Sunny Boy concisely, glad to find that he wasn't hurt.

The colored woman laughed, a deep, rich, happy laugh.

"You doan seem to be jest sure," she told him. "Stay where you is an' I'll carry you on up."

She did, too, and started him on his uncertain way down the street. In a few minutes his feet began to act strangely again, this time sending him in the general direction of the gutter.

"I spect I'd better go back," said Sunny Boy to himself. But he couldn't turn around.

Then up the street came a familiar gray-uniformed figure. It was the postman, the same merry, kind postman who brought letters to Sunny Boy's house and for whom Harriet was careful to have the number on the front door bright and shining.

"Stop me!" cried Sunny Boy, wobbling more wildly.

"Right—O!" agreed the postman, and proceeded to stop him by letting Sunny Boy skate right into him and his mail bag.

"And that's all right," said the cheerful postman, blowing his whistle and slipping some letters into a mailbox in a doorway as if nothing had happened. "Don't you want to skate back with me?"

Sunny Boy, seated on a handy doorstep, was unbuckling the skate straps. He looked up and smiled.

"Thank you very much, but Harriet's waiting for me," he answered politely. "An' I have to carry my skates, 'cause she won't let me hold the eggs 'less I walk."

CHAPTER III

PACKING THE TRUNK

AUNT BESSIE sat on the floor of Mother's room, with pencil and paper in her lap. She was Mrs. Horton's sister, and though she did not live with them, Sunny Boy and Mother saw her nearly every day.

"I wonder if you will need that extra coat?" Aunt Bessie was saying, as Sunny Boy came into the room.

For the two weeks were nearly gone and it was time to get ready to go to see Grandpa Horton. Early that morning Daddy had brought down the big trunk from the store-room, and ever since breakfast Mother and Aunt Bessie had been busy packing clothes

into it. Aunt Bessie kept a list of the things they put in so that Mother would be able to tell when the trunk was full whether she had left out anything she needed.

"I'll go and get my things," announced Sunny Boy, and Aunt Bessie blew him a kiss and went on with her work.

Upstairs Sunny Boy looked a long time at his toys before he could decide what to do about them. He couldn't leave his kiddie-car, that was certain. And there was the woolly black dog he took to bed with him at night, and a Teddy Bear that he was almost too old to play with, but not quite, and the wooden blocks. Then he would be sure to need his fire-engine and the roller skates. He must take all those with him. He made three trips down to Mother's door with the toys, and then, going down for the third time, he remembered the wind-mill out in the sandbox and ran out after that and brought it in.

"Bless the child, what is all this?" cried Aunt Bessie, as he came into Mother's room, bringing as many of the treasures as he could carry at one time.

"I'm helping," explained Sunny Boy. "There's more out in the hall."

He put down his load and ran out to bring in the rest.

"But, precious," said Mrs. Horton, looking from the kiddie-car to her little son, "we can't take all these things with us. Why, Mother wouldn't have a place to put your socks and blouses, to say nothing of the cunning bathing-suit we bought yesterday."

"You won't need them, you know," urged Aunt Bessie. "You'll be so busy playing with the new things you'll find up at Grandpa Horton's that you'll probably never remember the toys at home. Then when you come back they will seem like new ones."

Sunny Boy was disappointed. His kiddie-car was the hardest to give up. The

woolly dog, too, was very dear to him. Mrs. Horton understood, and she sat down in her low rocking chair and took her little boy on her lap.

"The kiddie-car wouldn't be any fun in the country," she said. "There are no stone pavements, you see, dear, and it wouldn't run on the grass. As for the woolly dog, why you will have a real dog to play with—a collie dog that will run after sticks and bring them to you and take walks with you. That will be fun, won't it?"

Sunny Boy slid to the floor and stood up. He was excited.

"I am simply crazy to have a real dog," he declared.

Mrs. Horton stared at him, but Aunt Bessie, bending over the trunk, sat down on the edge and laughed.

"Where in the world did you hear that, Sunny Boy?" asked Mother. "Who talks like that?"

Aunt Bessie swooped down upon her nephew.

"I do," she told her sister. "But I'll have to be more careful when little pitchers with big ears are about. Why don't you copy the nice things I say, Sunny?"

"Isn't that nice?" puzzled Sunny. "Shouldn't I say it? Why not, Mother?"

"It isn't wrong, dear," Mrs. Horton assured him. "Aunt Bessie only means that speaking that way is rather a bad habit to get into. We call it exaggeration. Let me see, how shall I make you understand? Well, if I say 'I'm starving to death,' when I mean that I am hungrier than usual for dinner, that's exaggeration. I couldn't be starving, unless I had had nothing to eat for several days."

"And though some people think I'm crazy, I'm really not," concluded Aunt Bessie gayly. "You think I'm rather nice, don't you, Sunny? And now I wonder if there's

a young man about who would be kind enough to take this skirt down to Harriet and ask her to please press the hem?"

"I will," offered Sunny Boy. "And then I'll come back and put my things away."

"While you are down in the kitchen, I wish you'd ask Harriet if the oven is ready for me to make some biscuits for lunch," said Mrs. Horton. "And tell her I said you might have a glass of milk and one of the sponge cakes without any pink icing."

Harriet pressed the skirt while Sunny Boy sat at one end of the ironing board and watched her and ate his sponge cake—which was almost as good as the kind with pink icing which were only for dessert—and drank his milk. Then Harriet gave him the skirt to carry back to Aunt Bessie and he remembered to ask about the oven. Harriet said to tell Mother that it was just right for baking biscuits.

"That means I must go down right away,"

said Mrs. Horton, when Sunny Boy told her. "We've about finished anyway, haven't we, Bessie? The man is to come at three this afternoon for the trunk."

"I've left a few chinks and corners, in case you want to tuck in some little trifles at the last minute," replied Aunt Bessie, "but otherwise it's ready to be strapped and locked."

"Let me lock it," said Sunny Boy eagerly. "I can stand on the top, too. I did for Cousin Lola when hers wouldn't shut."

Mrs. Horton was tying on a nice clean white apron.

"Thank you, dearest," she said. "Mother isn't quite ready to have the trunk locked. If we've packed it so full it won't close, why of course I'll call on you to stand on the top and make it shut."

Sunny Boy hoped the trunk wouldn't close, for he wanted to dance on the top. Then Mrs. Horton went down to Harriet's

kitchen to make puffy white biscuit for lunch and Aunt Bessie went off to give a music lesson.

Sunny Boy, left to put away his toys, explained matters to the woolly dog as he carried him upstairs.

"There will be a real dog for me to play with at Grandpa's," he said. "And little calves and lambs—Harriet said so. Maybe you might get broken in the trunk, anyway. But I won't like the real dog one bit more than I do you, and when we come back you can sleep with me every single night."

The woolly dog seemed to think this was all right, and he took it so cheerfully that Sunny Boy felt better immediately.

Mr. Horton came home to lunch, which was unusual, and after lunch he and Mrs. Horton had to go downtown to see about the tickets and the parlor car seats for the trip the next day. Sunny Boy was to take his nap and be wide awake again by three

o'clock, when the man was coming to take their trunk to the station.

Sunny Boy did not see how they were to find the trunk again if they once let it go, for surely no trunk could go all alone to Brookside. He resolved to ask Daddy. While he was wondering if there would be a piano in the parlor car—and he rather hoped there would and that he might be allowed to play on it—Sunny Boy fell asleep. Harriet, coming upstairs with a pile of clean clothes, woke him.

"Is it three o'clock?" he asked, afraid that he had missed the trunk man.

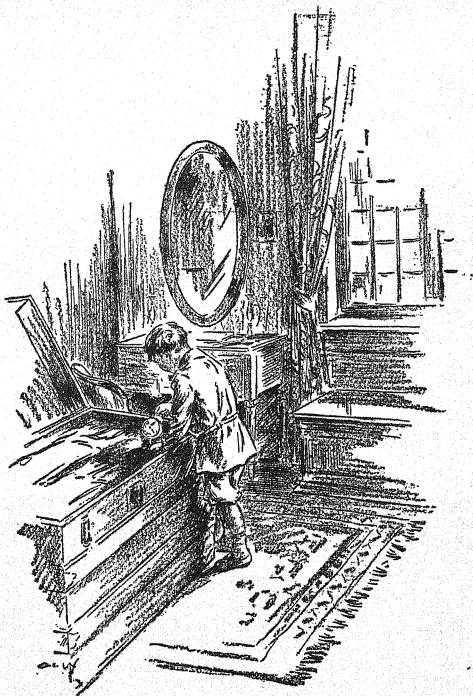
"Only half-past two," answered Harriet. "Your mother will be back any minute now to lock the trunk. You can dress yourself, can't you? I've another tablecloth to iron yet."

Sunny Boy could dress himself, of course. Wandering into Mother's room to borrow her hairbrush, he saw the little nickel alarm

clock on the table. Mother must have meant to pack that, and in her hurry had forgotten. Sunny Boy remembered that Daddy had told him all country folk "rose with the chickens," and upon inquiry he had learned that the chickens rose very early indeed—almost as soon as the sun. Sunny Boy thought it would be dreadful if he and Mother should oversleep their first morning at the farm and come downstairs to find the chickens up and the farmer people laughing at them. Yes, the alarm clock certainly must go.

He had not a very clear idea of how one went about it to set an alarm clock, but Daddy, he remembered, always wound the little pegs in the back. So Sunny Boy trustingly wound all the pegs he saw, as tight as they would turn, and tucked the clock away down deep in one of the corner holes Aunt Bessie had left in the trunk.

He had hardly packed it in when Mother



And tucked the clock away down deep in one of the corner holes Aunt Bessie had left in the trunk.

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came running breathlessly up the stairs crying that the express wagon was at the door. Hurriedly she put down the trunk lid, locked it, and tied on the tag that Daddy had written for her.

"That tells the train folks what to do with it," explained the trunk man to Sunny, swinging the heavy trunk to his shoulder as though it weighed no more than the kiddie-car and trotting downstairs with it.

Sunny Boy watched him put it in the wagon and drive away.

"Now we're almost ready," said Mrs. Horton smilingly. "We have to pack our bag and go to bed early, and then, in the morning, we really will be on our way to Grandpa Horton's."

"But there's the canary," Sunny Boy reminded her hesitatingly. "Can I carry him?"

"The train would frighten him so he might never sing any more," said Mrs.

Horton. "No, Aunt Bessie is going to keep him for us till we come back."

"Well, let's go now," urged Sunny. "Why can't we go this minute? Let's, Mother."

"And have Daddy come home to dinner to-night and find us gone?" said Mother reproachfully. "Why, Sunny!"

"Well—then perhaps we'd better wait," admitted Sunny Boy. "But one whole night's an awful long time, isn't it?"

CHAPTER IV

OFF FOR BROOKSIDE

PERHAPS the most fun of going on a journey is the fun of starting.

Sunny Boy began to get excited the moment he opened his eyes the next morning, and if he had had his way, they wouldn't have bothered with such an every-day affair as breakfast. One could eat breakfast any morning, but a trip on the train to one's grandfather's farm was much more important.

However, Daddy explained that all experienced travelers ate a good breakfast before they set out, and as Sunny Boy wanted above all things to do as real travelers did, he consented to sit down and be interested

for a few moments in his blue oatmeal bowl and its contents.

"You look so nice, Mother," he told Mrs. Horton suddenly.

"So do you," she assured him, smiling. "I think it must be because we are both wearing our new blue serge suits."

"Remember, you're going to take care of my girl," warned Daddy. "Don't let her get too tired, and try to make her comfortable, and don't let any one or anything bother her."

Sunny Boy gravely promised to look after Mother. He felt very proud that Daddy trusted him to take care of her on their first long journey together, and he resolved to wait on her all he could and to save her every possible step.

Harriet, who was not going with them, but who was going to help Aunt Bessie keep house until they came back, was bustling about, pulling down shades and closing and

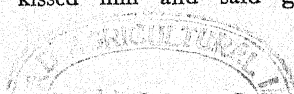
locking doors. The canary had gone, and Sunny Boy had a funny feeling that their house was going on a journey, too. In his trotting around after Harriet, while Mother was telephoning a last good-by to some friend, he found a square white box on the parlor table, neatly tied with red string—one of that mysterious kind that makes your fingers fairly itch to untie the string and look inside. Sunny Boy went in search of Mother.

“Could I open it?” he asked coaxingly. “I’ll tie it right up again, Mother. Maybe you have forgotten what is in it.”

“’Deed I haven’t!” laughed Mrs. Horton. “Give it to me, dear. It’s a surprise for you—we’ll open it on the train.”

Sunny Boy obediently handed her the package, and in a few minutes he had forgotten all about it.

At last the house was ready to leave, and Harriet kissed him and said good-by.



Sunny Boy watched her down the street until she turned the corner. He had a little ache in his throat, but he was too big a boy to cry.

"Precious," said Mother who knew perhaps how he was feeling, "I'm afraid I've left my little coin purse on my bureau. Would you mind going up and getting it for me?"

The house upstairs was very still and hot. Sunny Boy tiptoed softly as he hurried into Mother's room. There on the bureau lay the little silver purse and a clean handkerchief that smelled like a bunch of violets.

"You left your hanky, Mother," he cried, running downstairs. "And you said folks should never, never, begin to go anywhere without a clean hanky, you know."

Mr. Horton, standing on the front step, opened the screen door and put in his head.

"Taxi's coming!" he announced. "Ready, Olive? I have the bag right here. Come, son."

Sunny Boy was thrilled at the thought of riding in that orange dragon of an automobile. Mother and Daddy had friends who often took them motoring pleasant afternoons, and sometimes Sunny Boy went with them. But every one knows that is different from having a gay colored car roll up to your front door and wait especially for you.

The young man who drove the car opened the door with a flourish and helped Mrs. Horton in. Then he turned to lift Sunny Boy, but that young person hung back.

"I could ride with you—up front," he suggested.

"Oh, you might tumble out, going around the corner," cried Mrs. Horton.

Daddy, who had been locking the front door, came down to them, carrying the black leather bag that was to go with Sunny Boy and Mother.

"Do you know," said Daddy slowly, "I

think the bag will have to go in the front seat, Sunny? I wouldn't like to put it down on Mother's pretty new patent leather pumps. Sometime when we have no baggage you shall ride with the chauffeur."

So Sunny Boy climbed in and sat between Mother and Daddy, and the chauffeur just touched his wheel and they shot off up the street. Indeed they started so suddenly that Sunny Boy went over backward and laughed so hard that he quite forgot to be disappointed because he could not sit on the front seat.

"What's in the bag, Mother?" he asked, as they rolled along through the streets.

"Hair-brushes and combs and towels and soap, and your tooth-brush and mine, and the tooth-paste," answered Mrs. Horton. "And pajamas for you and a nightie for me, in case we can't get the trunk to-night."

"But it is going on the train just like us," urged Sunny Boy. "Daddy said so."

"But it will be nearly night before we reach Brookside," explained Mrs. Horton, "and Grandpa will meet us with a horse and surrey most likely. We will have to leave the trunk at the station till some one can go and get it for us in the morning. I have a play suit in the bag for you, though, so trunk or no trunk, you can be real country boy."

Presently the taxi rolled up under a stone arch, and Mr. Horton said they were at the station. They all got out and went into a great space filled with people. Porters were rushing about with suitcases and bags, crowds of men and women were going in several directions at once, and a man running for his train nearly ran right over Sunny Boy.

"I'll get the trunk checked and then give you the tickets," Mr. Horton said to his wife. "You sit down over there by the door where I can find you, and I'll be back in five minutes. We have plenty of time."

Sunny Boy and Mother sat down by the door and watched the people. Opposite them sat a short, fat woman with a baby in her arms and five little children, two girls and three boys, in the seats nearest her. They were each sucking a lolly-pop and took turns giving the baby a taste. Although they were very sticky and not exactly tidy, they seemed to love one another very much and to be having a very good time.

"Where do you suppose they're going?" Sunny Boy asked.

Mrs. Horton did not know. Perhaps, if they watched them, they might see them take the train.

Then Sunny Boy wanted to know where they kept the trains. He could hear them, and nearly every minute a man with a big trumpet—which Mother said was a megaphone—would call out something, and from all over the station people would come rushing to get on the train. But though

Sunny Boy watched carefully, he could not see a single smokestack.

"The trains are downstairs—you'll see when we go out," said Mrs. Horton. "I wonder what can be keeping your father?" He has been gone almost fifteen minutes."

"Will there be a piano in the parlor car?" Sunny Boy wanted to know next.

Mrs. Horton laughed merrily.

"A parlor car is like the rest of the cars in a train, except that the seats are more comfortable," she explained. "Anyway, we have to go in an ordinary coach, because Daddy and I couldn't get a single parlor car seat yesterday. They had all been taken. I don't see what can have happened to Daddy!"

Just then Mr. Horton came up to them. There was a baggage man with him and they both looked rather excited.

"I guess you'll have to come over to the

baggage room, Olive," said Mr. Horton in a low voice, "and see what you can do about straightening out this mess. They want to know what you've packed in the trunk."

Sunny Boy clung tightly to Mother's hand while they walked over to a low, broad window on one side of the station wall. This opened into the baggage room, and a perfect ocean of trunks was being tossed about in there. The pink came into Mother's cheeks as she saw the crowd gathered about the window.

"You see, Ma'am," said the big, tall man at the window in a gruff voice that was somehow kind and friendly, too, "it's like this—we figure out something blew up in that trunk of yours about ten o'clock last night, and naturally we want to know something about it. In fact, we can't check the trunk for you until we do. A dozen men heard it, and—"

"But I don't understand," protested Mrs.

Horton. "I packed nothing that could possibly blow up, as you say. My sister and I put everything in with our own hands. I even have a list. I can show you that—" she fumbled in her velvet handbag with fingers that trembled.

"Probably an infernal machine," declared a shrill voice in the crowd that was now growing too large for comfort. "With the country in the unsettled state it is now, you can look for anything."

"What's a 'fernal 'chine?" asked Sunny Boy boldly.

"Like a bomb—it goes off with a whang," answered a freckle-faced boy standing near. He reminded Sunny of his friend, the grocery boy.

The words, "Goes off with a whang," reminded Sunny Boy of something, though. He looked up into the friendly blue eyes of the baggage-window man.

"Maybe—" began Sunny Boy, "Maybe,

I guess it was the alarm clock I packed!" he finished bravely.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" said the baggage-window man. His blue eyes crinkled.

The crowd had heard, and a ripple of laughter ran through them. As suddenly as they had gathered, they melted away.

"Let me have your tickets," said the baggage-window man. "I guess you can still make the ten-forty-five."

CHAPTER V

ON THE TRAIN

WELL, though, as Mr. Horton expressed it, they "had to hustle," they did make the ten-forty-five. They went down in an elevator to board the train and the ticket man at the gate would not let Mr. Horton through.

Daddy hugged his little boy tight before he let him go, and Mother had diamonds in her pretty brown eyes as she turned from saying good-by to him. But when they looked back to wave to him, there was Daddy smiling gayly at them and waving his hat.

"Have a fine time," he called. "Take care of Mother, Sunny Boy. And look for me exactly three weeks from to-day."

Sunny Boy and Mother found a seat after they had walked through a number of cars that were filled, and, though it was rather dark, Sunny Boy could make out the people near them.

"Look, Mother," he whispered, "there's the woman with the baby and the other children we saw in the station. Isn't it funny they took our train?"

Sure enough, there they were, a little further down the aisle on the other side of the car, lolly-pops and all.

Mrs. Horton took off her hat and Sunny Boy's and put them in a large paper bag she took from her bag.

"That will keep them clean," she said, "and we shall be cooler and more comfortable without them. We may have to shut the window when we get out of the tunnel, but we need the air now. Now we're off! Hear the conductor calling?"

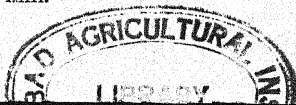
"All a-bo-ard," Sunny Boy heard some one

crying. "All a-bo-ard!" and soon the train began to move.

Slowly they rumbled out of the dark gray of the train shed, past so many snorting, sniffing black iron engines that Sunny Boy did not see why they did not run into each other, past a crew of men working on the railroad tracks, past red and green lights, into a tunnel without a roof, but walled high on either side with smooth concrete walls. Just as Sunny Boy grew tired of looking at this wall, it stopped, and the train was merrily rushing along through open streets. Sunny Boy looked at Mother and smiled.

"Isn't it fun?" she said.

For a long time Sunny Boy amused himself by watching the country through which they were riding. They passed one or two little stations without stopping, and at the crossings Sunny Boy saw children waving to the train. He waved to them and hoped that they saw him.



"Tickets!" The conductor had reached their car.

Mrs. Horton took a ticket from her bag and gave it to her son. He held it out and the conductor punched it and passed on.

"Do you want me to keep it?" he asked.

"I'll put it in my purse so it can't be lost," Mother answered. "But when the conductor asks for it again you may give it to him. He won't come again for ever so long."

As Sunny Boy was watching an automobile racing with the train on a road that ran alongside the tracks, a white-aproned colored man came into their car.

"First call for lunch!" he shouted. "First call for lunch!"

Sunny Boy felt suddenly hungry. Down the aisle the woman with all the children had opened a pasteboard box and they were having a picnic right there. Other people were eating sandwiches.

"We'll go and get our lunch," decided Mrs. Horton. "Be careful going down the aisle, dear, and don't bump into people any more than you can help."

They had to go through a parlor car to reach the dining car, and Sunny Boy saw for himself that there was no piano, nothing but chairs on either side of the aisle. A colored waiter helped him into his seat at a little table in the dining car, and he thought it great fun to eat chicken broth while looking out of the window at the telegraph poles galloping by. The poles seemed to be moving instead of the train, but Sunny Boy knew the train really moved.

"Will there be another call for lunch?" he asked, remembering what the man had shouted, as he ate his mashed potato and peas.

"Oh yes, but we won't come," said Mrs. Horton. "That will be for the people who weren't hungry when we were."

A man at the table across from theirs picked up the menu card.

"Now what on earth shall I order for dessert?" he frowned. "If the doctor won't let me have meat, I suppose I have to eat something."

"Chocolate ice-cream," suggested Sunny Boy helpfully, feeling sorry for any one who did not know that it was the finest dessert in the world.

The frown slid away from the man's face and he grinned cheerfully at the small boy.

"Is that what you are going to have?" he demanded. "All right then, I will, too."

And when it came, a neat little mountain of it, he and Sunny smiled again at each other before they buried their silver spoons in the beautiful dark iciness of it.

Back in their seat in their car, Sunny was restless. To Mother's suggestion that he take a nap, he said that he didn't feel sleepy.

He wished he had something to do—he was tired of looking at trees and things.

“I hoped you would take a little nap, but I suppose there is too much excitement,” said Mrs. Horton. “Well, then, how would you like to see the surprise now?”

“The surprise?” repeated Sunny Boy. “Oh, Mother—is that the box?”

For answer Mrs. Horton opened the leather bag and took out the box neatly wrapped in white paper that Sunny Boy had seen on the parlor table at home. She put it in his lap and then took up the magazine she was reading.

“Oh my!” said Sunny Boy, when he had pulled off string and paper and lifted the lid.

Inside the box were six little packages, each wrapped in white paper and tied with pink string. It was like Christmas. Sunny Boy unwrapped them all, one after another, and underneath he found two long thin boxes, also wrapped and tied.

In the first package he found a box of colored crayons; in another, a little pad of drawing paper; another held an envelope stamped and addressed and a sheet of writing paper. In another was a lead pencil; the fifth was a cake of sweet chocolate, and the sixth package was a little lump of modeling wax. The two long thin packages proved to be boxes of animal crackers.

Sunny Boy was chiefly interested in the envelope, because he could not read the writing on it.

"Who's it to, Mother?" he urged. "Your writing runs into letters so I can't read it."

Mrs. Horton explained that the envelope was addressed to Daddy, and that she thought she and Sunny Boy might write a little note to him and that he would have it in the morning.

"Is there a mail-box on the train?" asked Sunny, in surprise.

"No, dear. But we will give it to the conductor and he will see that it is mailed at the next station where we stop. You print on one side of the sheet, and I will write a little message on the other."

So, taking great pains and holding the pencil very tightly because the motion of the train made it wobble in his fingers, Sunny Boy printed this:

DEER DADDY: I LOV YOU.
WE ARE HAVING A NICE TIME
ON THE TRANE. I AM TAK-
ING CARE OF MOTHER. YOUR
LOVING SUN, SUNNY BOY.

Then Mother wrote her note, and they folded it up and sealed the letter and Sunny gave it to the conductor when he next came through.

After that he drew pictures and colored them with the crayons and nibbled at his chocolate and modeled dogs and cats and

horses with the wax. He opened the cracker boxes, too, and played Noah's ark with them. The children down the aisle watched him and nudged each other. Their mother would not let them out into the aisle, or very likely they would have come closer to see what that boy was doing with so many nice things.

"I'd like, Mother," announced Sunny Boy suddenly, "to pass my crackers to the little boy with the green tie—he looks like Nelson Baker. Would that be all right?"

"Why, of course," agreed Mrs. Horton. "Ask their mother if she is willing for them to have some, and give some to each child, dear. And don't stay too long, because I shall miss you."

Sunny Boy went down the aisle to the seats where the children were. The lollypops had disappeared long ago, and so had the picnic sandwiches. They were all stickier than ever, were those children. The

heavy baby was asleep in his mother's lap, and she smiled when Sunny asked her if she were willing he should pass his crackers.

"Thank you, they'd like 'em first-rate," she said, speaking low so as not to wake the baby. "Mamie, Ellen, Jamie, Fred, George—say thank you, and don't grab."

Sunny Boy stayed a little while, talking to them all, and they told him they were going to another state far away. They would be all night on the train. Sunny Boy was a bit disappointed that he must get off at Cloverways, the nearest station to Grandpa's farm, for he had never stayed all night on a train in his life. He hurried back to Mother to tell her of the fortunate family who were to spend the night on the train.

"That poor woman!" Mother, to his astonishment, exclaimed. "She'll be worn out before she gets all those children safely somewhere. Think of sitting up all night with that fretful baby! I'll tell you, Sunny

Boy—we get off in about half an hour now; wouldn't you like to leave your surprise package to amuse those children who are going farther than we are? I'll help you tie them up again, and I have two more cakes of chocolate in the bag. You are so careful with your things they are not hurt at all, and it will keep them busy for an hour or two, playing with them."

Sunny Boy thought this a fine plan, and he hardly had all the packages tied up and in the box again when Mrs. Horton pinned on her hat and gave him his, saying that the next station was theirs. She went down the aisle with him and they gave the surprise box to the five youngsters who were delighted to have something new to look at. And then the train stopped, and the brakeman lifted Sunny Boy down, and he found an old gentleman was kissing Mother.

CHAPTER VI

BROOKSIDE

SUNNY BOY found himself looking into two dark eyes so much like Daddy's that he almost jumped. But the rest of the old gentleman was not like Daddy—no indeed. He was short and round instead of tall, and he had the curliest white hair and beard Sunny Boy had ever seen. Sunny Boy knew this must be Grandpa Horton, and when he was lifted up in a pair of strong arms and given a tremendous hug before being gently set down, he decided that he loved him very much.

"Grandma couldn't come," explained Grandpa, leading the way to an old-fashioned carriage and pair of horses drawn

up at the other end of the station. "There's only Araminta to help her with the supper, and Grandma's heart was set on having the biscuits just right. In you go, Olive. Wait a minute, though, what about your trunk?"

"I have the check, Father," Mrs. Horton answered. "I thought Jimmie would be coming down in the morning to the creamery. He can get it then."

"An' Mother brought her nightie in the bag an' my pajamas," contributed Sunny Boy, waiting while Mother and the bag were stowed away on the back seat.

"Want to ride up with me and help drive?" said Grandpa, turning to him suddenly.

Poor Sunny Boy was sorely tempted, but he decided quickly.

"I have to take care of Mother," he said. "She might be lonesome all alone in the back."

"No, indeed," cried Mother instantly. "You ride up there with Grandpa, precious. You were so good not to tease about the taxi. I'll lean over the seat and talk to you both."

So Sunny Boy and Grandpa got into the front seat, and Sunny learned that the horses' names were Paul and Peter, and that they were not afraid of automobiles, and that he could drive them whenever some older person was with him. Paul and Peter trotted briskly along, and Grandpa said they knew they were going home to supper.

They drove through the town, and Sunny Boy thought it looked very cool, and clean, and pretty, after the warm and dusty train. The grass was bright green, and, as Sunny Boy wrote Harriet, "millions and dozens" of robins were singing among the trees. A great red sun was going to bed back of a high dark hill, and Sunny Boy, sitting beside

Grandpa and holding the reins while Paul and Peter trotted steadily, thought that the country was the nicest place he had ever been in.

Then, where the road divided, Grandpa took the reins and turned the team to the left. They entered a lane with white-washed fences on either side and tall waving trees like soldiers, which Mrs. Horton said were elms.

"Now, Sunny Boy," she told him softly, "here's Brookside."

Sunny Boy saw an old red brick house with a great white porch across the front and a green lawn all about it. A white picket fence went all around the lawn, and as Grandpa stopped the horses before the gate, three people came out. There was a tall, thin young man who went to the horses' heads, a little girl with flaming red hair who looked about fourteen years old, and a tall, thin old lady with hair as white and curly as

Grandpa's, who came out to the carriage and took Mother and Sunny Boy both in her arms at once.

"You're Grandma," said Sunny Boy.

It was Grandma Horton, and she remembered Sunny Boy without a bit of trouble; though, as he had been only two weeks old the last time she had seen him, he could not be expected to remember her.

"And this is Araminta," said Grandma, drawing the little red-haired girl forward. "She is my right hand in the house. You recall Jimmie, Olive?"

Jimmie was the young man holding the horses. He came and shook hands with Mrs. Horton, blushing a little, and chucked Sunny under the chin. Then he took the team away to the barn, and Mother and Sunny Boy and Grandpa and Grandma Horton and Araminta went in to supper.

They had wonderful fresh foamy milk to drink, and hot biscuits and cold ham for the



grown-ups. Sunny Boy was not expected to eat those—not at night. There were baked apples, too, and honey and cookies. Sunny, seated before a bowl of bread and milk, held a cookie in his hand and wondered what was the matter with the hanging lamp with the pretty red shade. It swung up and down like a train lantern.

“He’s sleepy,” he heard some one say. It sounded like Araminta.

He opened his eyes as wide as he could make them go, tried to take another bite of cookie and made one last desperate effort to smile. The smile ran into a yawn, and Sunny Boy gave up and tumbled, a tired little ball of weariness, into Mother’s lap.

He never knew who carried him upstairs, or when he was undressed. So, waking in the morning to find the sun shining in four windows at once, and Mother in her blue dressing gown brushing her hair, he was a bit surprised.

"Hello!" said Mother gayly. "How do you think you are going to like the country?"

"Are the chickens up?" asked Sunny Boy.

"Hours ago. Mr. Rooster crowing under our window woke me up at five o'clock," replied Mrs. Horton. "I heard Jimmie bring in the milk a few minutes before you sat up. And if you want to ride into town with him after the trunk—"

Sunny Boy jumped out of bed and fairly galloped with his dressing. He insisted on using the wash bowl and pitcher, though there was a nice white bathroom down the hall, because a wash bowl and pitcher were new to him. Just as he had finished brushing his hair, Araminta rapped at the door to tell them breakfast was ready.

In the dining room Sunny Boy met another member of the family. Lying on a rug in the corner was a shaggy brown and white collie that rose as they came in and,

coming over to Mrs. Horton, laid a beautiful pointed nose in her lap.

"We shut him in the barn last night, because we thought you'd be too tired to stand his barking," said Grandma. "His name is Bruce, and he is very gentle. Don't be afraid of him, Sunny Boy."

The collie went back to his rug while they were at breakfast, but when Jimmie and Sunny Boy started for the door he got up to follow them.

"Is he going, too?" asked Sunny Boy.

"He never goes off the farm," answered Jimmie. "He'll follow us to the end of the lane and then go back. Hop in lively, now, for we're late as it is."

Jimmie had harnessed Peter to a wagon that had only one high seat. In back of this were two cans of milk which Jimmie explained, in answer to Sunny's questions, would be made into butter at the creamery in Cloverways.

"Is Araminta your sister?" Sunny Boy asked him as they jogged along.

"No, she's the tenant farmer's daughter—the man who does the farming for your Grandpa, you know. I work Spring and Summer for him and in Winter I go to the agricultural school. That's where they teach you to be a farmer."

After they left the milk at the creamery they drove down to the station and got the trunk. Sunny Boy told Jimmie about the alarm clock, and he laughed. Then, after stopping at a yellow store with high white steps, where Jimmie bought some groceries for Grandma, they turned Peter's head toward home.

"What are you going to do first?" asked Jimmie, smiling down at his small companion.

"I don't know—what are you?"

"Oh, I have work to do—have to weed the garden this morning. But you have the

whole farm to get acquainted with. I'll tell you—if I were you, I'd go down to the brook and play."

"I guess I will," decided Sunny Boy.

Mrs. Horton wanted to unpack the trunk, and when Grandma assured her that the brook was not deep and Sunny Boy promised not to go wading until she should be there, she kissed him and told him to run along and have a good time.

On his way to the brook, Sunny Boy passed Grandpa and Jimmie in wide straw hats working in the garden. Grandpa pointed out the brook to him. It ran through a meadow that came right up to the garden.

"I'll be down and play with you myself as soon as we get this lettuce transplanted," said Grandpa.

Sunny had never had a brook to play in before, and he thought it fine. It was not

a very wide brook, but it was very clear, and Sunny Boy could see the pebbles on the bottom. Little darting fish went in and out, hiding under the long grasses that leaned over the edge. Bruce came panting down as Sunny Boy looked at the water, and took a long drink. Then he lay down in the grass, his brown doggie eyes fixed watchfully on his new friend.

"Wonder what that is?" said Sunny Boy to himself.

"That" was a wooden wheel that turned in the water with slow, even jerks, sending out a little spray of rainbow drops that fell back into the water. Sunny Boy got down on his knees to watch it. Quite suddenly, without warning, the wheel stopped turning.

Sunny Boy waited, but it did not turn again. He blew on it gently, and still it did not move. Then he ran over to the big tree nearest him and picked up a stick.

"I'll fix it," he said aloud. "Grandpa'll be surprised if I get it mended 'fore he comes."

Well, as it turned out, Grandpa was surprised, but not as much as Sunny Boy. He leaned over, and jabbed the obstinate wheel with his stick; the dry end of the stake snapped, and Sunny Boy, stick and all, tumbled head-first into the water. In after him leaped a flash of brown and white—good old Bruce!

The water was very cold, and when Sunny had swallowed some of it and shaken some from his eyes, he scrambled to his feet crying bitterly. He thought he was freezing to death. Bruce pulled at his coat and tried to drag him back, and it was his frantic barking that attracted Jimmie's notice. He came tearing across the meadow, followed by Grandpa.

"There—there—you're all right," said Jimmie, as he pulled the little boy out in a

jiffy. "Don't cry so, Brother, you're only frightened. How'd it happen?"

"The wheel stopped!" sobbed Sunny Boy. "An' I tried to fix it. I was going to s'prise Grandpa."

"So you did," admitted Jimmie, while Bruce circled around them, barking madly. "Now we'll have to look out that you don't surprise us more by catching cold from this ducking."

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CHAPTER VII

ADVENTURES BEGIN

GRANDPA hurried up to them, his kind face filled with anxiety.

"I brought my coat," he gasped, for he was out of breath from running. "Wrap him in that, Jimmie. Then hustle for the house."

Jimmie carrying Sunny Boy and Grandpa and Bruce following made quite a little procession. Mrs. Horton, who was down at the gate with Grandma inspecting the garden, was startled.

"Sunny Boy!" she cried, and came running toward them. "What happened? Are you hurt?"

"He's all right," Grandpa assured her cheerfully. "Just fell into the brook and

got a little damp, that's all. Mercy, Olive, don't look like that—brooks were made for boys to fall into. Why I'd dragged Harry out a dozen times before he was Arthur's age."

Of course Mother and Grandma were relieved and thankful to find it was nothing more serious than a ducking. But they decided that it was safer to rub Sunny Boy briskly with towels and put him to bed to rest.

"You might take cold and be sick a long time, precious," explained Mrs. Horton, as she popped him between the sheets. "You would miss all the Summer fun then. Now close your eyes and Mother will read to you."

And while listening to the adventures of a little Italian boy, Sunny's blue eyes grew heavier and heavier, till he went to sleep.

When he awoke, Mrs. Horton had gone, and the room was empty and quiet. Sunny

Boy lay for a time, studying the walls and furniture, for he had been asleep when put to bed the night before and had dressed for breakfast in such a hurry that he had not noticed much of anything. It was a very different room from his blue and white bedroom at home, but a very pleasant, pretty room, too. The wall-paper had gay little pink roses scattered thickly over it, and the furniture was all very large and dark and brightly polished. Sunny Boy did not know it, but the four-posted bed in which he was lying had belonged to his great-grandmother, and would be his own some day.

Presently Sunny Boy tired of lying still and began to be conscious of a funny sensation somewhere down in his ribs. At least he thought it must be his ribs. He remembered that he had had no lunch. Did his grandma expect him to starve at her house?

Sunny Boy got up and found his slippers. The 'fernal 'chine' of an alarm clock was ticking steadily away on the bureau where Mrs. Horton had placed it after unpacking, and with a great deal of trouble and much tracing with a wet forefinger, he made out that it was three o'clock—or was it five o'clock? Three o'clock in the afternoon and no lunch! Sunny Boy felt so sorry for himself that he sat down on the floor and wept a little. He was not quite awake yet, you see, and our troubles often look rather large when we first wake up. In just a minute Sunny Boy stopped crying—he had thought what to do.

Naturally his grandmother would not wish him to go without eating all day, so why not go down and try to find a little chocolate cake, or some of those cookies left from last night's supper? Sunny Boy had not the slightest idea where the pantry was, but he was sure there must be one—every

house had a pantry with a cake box in it. So, in his slippers and pink pajamas, he crept out into the hall intent on locating the pantry in Grandma Horton's house.

He met no one on his way downstairs, and the first floor of the house seemed deserted, too. He couldn't know that his mother and Grandma had peeped in at him several times and found him fast asleep, or that now they were on the side porch entertaining a caller. Jimmie and Grandpa were working in the garden again, and Araminta had gone home until it should be time to start supper. This was why Sunny Boy found no one on his path to the pantry. He found it without great trouble, because he kept going until he came to the kitchen, and a kitchen and the pantry are never very far apart.

Grandma's pantry was a beautiful place, shelves and walls and floor a snowy white, and boxes and jars in apple-pie order. There was a large window with a table under

it, and there Grandma rolled her cookies and made her pies, but Sunny Boy did not know that yet. He spied a round box that, to his experienced eyes, looked as though it might hold cake.

"I'll get a chair," he said aloud, talking to himself, as he often did. "An' I won't take only a little piece. I wish I was bigger."

He meant taller.

He carried in a kitchen chair and scrambled up on it. His eyes were on a level with the shelf, and there sat two beautiful brown pies beside the cake box. Sunny poked a small, fat finger into the nearest one to taste it. It was very good, though he did not "remember" the taste. My, how soury it was! Grandma had baked two rhubarb pies. But no pie could hold Sunny's attention very long—his heart was set on cake. Standing on his tiptoes, he managed to lift the tin lid of the box when a voice at the door startled him.

"My land of Goshen!" ejaculated Araminta.

Sunny Boy's hand slipped, the lid came down sharply on his fingers, and his other hand swept across the shelf to knock over a brown bowl from which some sticky yellow stuff began to stream.

"Now you've done it!" Araminta told him. "That's the custard pudding for tomorrow's dinner. What in the world are you trying to do, anyway?"

Araminta was not accustomed to finding small boys in pale pink pajamas standing on chairs in her pantry, so no wonder she was surprised. But she was kind, was Araminta, and she helped Sunny Boy down, and did not scold. She got a basin of clean water and a clean cloth and wiped up the pudding and washed Sunny's hands for him.

"I came back an hour earlier than I had to," she told him, "'cause I thought maybe you'd be up and might like to see the chicken

yard. No wonder you're hungry if you didn't have any lunch. Your Grandma has some saved for you on a big plate. I guess they don't know you're up. You go and get dressed, and I'll warm it up for you. And don't say anything about knocking over the custard—let 'em think it was the cat."

Sunny Boy was washed and dressed by the time Mother came up again to see if he was awake. She helped him a bit with his hair and straightened his collar and kissed him three or four times and then went down with him to see him eat. Grandma did not call it lunch—they had dinner and supper on the farm.

Sunny Boy had a queer little feeling all the while he was eating and he was so quiet that his mother thought perhaps he was still tired from his tumble into the brook. He went out with Araminta afterward to see the chicken yard, and he almost, but not quite, forgot the queer feeling in watching the

hundreds of white chickens and white ducks busily scratching in the yard and drinking water "upside down," as he told Grandpa that night. A chicken, you know, doesn't drink water as you do, but differently. Araminta gave Sunny Boy a handful of cracked corn to throw to the biddies, and they came flocking about his feet, pushing and scrambling so that he was glad when Araminta shooed them away from him. She showed him the nests, too, and in many of them were pretty white eggs. He could gather them some morning, all himself, Araminta told him.

Coming out of the chicken yard they met Jimmie, whistling merrily. He was glad to find Sunny Boy all right after his wetting, and asked him if he did not want to come out to the stable to see Peter and Paul and "the prettiest little fellows you ever saw." Sunny Boy went gladly, but the queer little feeling went, too.

Peter and Paul, it seemed, lived in a house that was called a barn, and were very comfortable. They had each a little room, "box stalls" Jimmie called them, and all the hay they could eat. For breakfast and dinner and supper they usually had corn and now and then some oats. The barn was a delightful place, and Jimmie pointed out the hay mow when Sunny Boy mentioned that Harriet had said that was the place to play on rainy days.

"Not much hay in it now," announced Jimmie, leading the way into another little room. "We start cutting this year's crop next week. Ever seen any one hay?"

Sunny Boy had not, but he forgot to say so, because he found himself looking down on a gentle-eyed collie dog mother with three of the dearest little blind baby puppies you could wish to see. Jimmie explained that Lassie was Mrs. Bruce, and that the puppies would have their eyes open in a day or two.

"And one of them's to be yours—your Grandpa said so," Jimmie went on.

And in spite of that—and what child would not be pleased to have a puppy for his very own?—the queer little feeling still stayed with Sunny Boy. It was like a small lump of lead right down at the end of his throat.

"I'm going up to the house now for the milk pails," announced Jimmie, when they had finished looking at the puppies. "You can come out and watch me milk if you want to."

In the kitchen they found Mother and Grandma.

"Don't let Topaz in," said Grandma, as Jimmie opened the door. "That wretched cat has eaten half my egg custard, and I won't have him in the house again to-night."

Araminta was setting the table in the dining room and did not hear. Sunny Boy gulped a little, but spoke up bravely.

"'Twasn't Topaz, Grandma. I knocked the custard over, looking for cake. I didn't mean to, but my hand slipped."

Then how he did cry!

But when the whole story had come out, and Grandma had hugged him, and had said not to mind, that she could make another pudding in a minute; after Mother had whispered to him that while it was naughty to help oneself to cake without asking, it was much worse to let the kitty-cat be blamed, and had kissed him and assured him she was sure he would not do it again; after Araminta had given him a pink peppermint—after all this, and Sunny Boy was on his way to the barn with Jimmie to watch the milking, do you know, that queer little feeling had entirely disappeared!

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CHAPTER VIII

A LETTER FROM DADDY

“MY LAND of Goshen!”

Sunny Boy sat on the fence post waiting for the postman. He was great friends now with the postman who came to the farm, almost as great friends as with the cheerful, gray-uniformed letter-carrier in the city, the one who brought letters to the house with the shining numbers that Harriet faithfully polished.

This postman in the country did not wear a uniform, and he came in a little red automobile that one could hear chug-chugging half a mile away. He did not whistle either, as the city postman did, but he put the letters and parcels into a tin box nailed

to a post; then he turned up a little tin flag to say that he had been there, and the farm folk came down to the end of the lane and got the mail. The country postman came only once a day, instead of the three times Sunny Boy was used to seeing the city postman, but that really made it more exciting.

"My land of Goshen!" said Sunny Boy again. He was rather proud of that expression, and used it as often as he could.

"I don't think you ought to say that," Araminta had reproved him the first time she heard him.

"But you say it," argued Sunny Boy.

"Well, that's no reason why you should," retorted Araminta, who, like many grown-ups, did not always practice what she preached. "Anyway, I'm going to stop saying it when I'm fifteen."

"Maybe I will, too," promised Sunny Boy blithely. And that was the best Araminta could hope from him.

"My land—" began Sunny for the third time, but the red automobile of the postman came to a sliding stop beside the box, and fortunately interrupted him.

"Hello Blue Jeans!" called the postman, who found a new name for Sunny Boy every day. "How do you like farming now? Am I to give the mail to you, or put it in the box?"

This was an every day question. The postman pretended to be very much surprised when Sunny Boy said he would take the mail, and he always handed it out a piece at a time, so that Sunny never knew how much was coming.

"There's two for your grandfather," counted the postman, handing them to his small friend standing on the running board. "And that's for your grandmother. Here's the Cloverways' weekly paper for the whole family. My, my, one—two—three—five seven letters, all for your mother. And a

box, too. Is that all? Yep, guess that's all to-day."

Sunny Boy got down from the running board and the postman started his car slowly.

"Oh, Mr. Corntassel!" the postman called suddenly. "Here's another. I declare, I must be getting old, or need glasses, or something. If there isn't a letter addressed to you and I came within one of taking it back to the post-office with me!"

He gave Sunny Boy another letter, and this time drove off without stopping.

"My land of Goshen!" said Sunny Boy, who was using Araminta's pet expression far more often than she did. "Such a heap of letters. Maybe mine's from Daddy."

He found Mrs. Horton in the porch swing, sewing. She had to kiss the seven new freckles on his nose before she could read her mail, and then Sunny Boy had to trudge about and find Grandpa and

Grandma and deliver their letters to them. He felt quite like a postman himself, though it is doubtful if real postmen have sugar cookies and peppermints paid to them for each letter they bring. So by the time Sunny Boy got around to having his own letter read to him, Mother had finished hers and had opened her box.

"See what Daddy sent us," she said, holding up the package for him to see. In the box were two balls of pink wool and four of dark blue.

"Now I can make you a sweater," explained Mrs. Horton. "The pink is for a scarf I am finishing for Aunt Bessie. By the way, I had a letter from her, dear, and she sends her love, and so does Harriet."

"All right," agreed Sunny Boy briefly. "Could you read this now, Mother?"

"Why, it's from Daddy!" cried Mother, taking the crumpled envelope Sunny Boy drew from his pocket. "Did you wait till

you gave every one else his mail, precious? Well, listen—”

“Dear Sunny Boy,” said Daddy’s letter. “So you fell into the brook! Don’t tell Jimmie, but I did the same when I was just about as tall as you are. Grandma fished me out—only she wasn’t Grandma then.

“Don’t go fishing till I come up, for you might catch them all and leave none for me. One week from the day you’re reading this I’ll be at Brookside. Hope you and Jimmie and Peter and Paul will come to meet me. Mother, too, if she likes, and Grandpa and Grandma and Araminta and Bruce, if they’re going to be real glad to see me. You seem to have a lot of friends. Brookside always was a mighty fine place for small boys—like you and me.

“Can’t write more now because a man wants to talk to me—at least he is ringing my telephone bell and won’t stop. Love to you and Mother from—DADDY.”

Whenever Sunny Boy was pleased he made a little song to sing. He did so now,

skipping out to the garden where Grandpa was generally to be found.

"Daddy's coming! Daddy's coming! Next week! Pretty soon," sang Sunny Boy to a tune of his own. "Jimmie, where's Grandpa? Daddy's coming next week, pretty soon!"

"Well don't walk all over the cabbage plants if he is," said Jimmie, who was busy and did not like to be interrupted. "I think your grandfather is down with Mr. Sites looking at the mowing machine. They're down in the south meadow."

Sunny Boy knew his way about the farm as well as Jimmie by this time. He knew the pretty brown cow, Mrs. Butterball and her long legged calf, Butterette; and he was fast friends with Peter and Paul and the dogs. Sunny had named his puppy Brownie. He knew most of the chickens and ducks by names of his own, and he had

held a little squirmy lamb in his arms for a minute, with Jimmie helping. He was going fishing, when Daddy came; and he was going up into the woods the first time some one had a moment to take him. Then he would have been all over the farm.

Still singing to himself, he trotted down to the south meadow and found Grandpa and a strange man talking earnestly together.

"Look out! Stay where you are!" called the strange man suddenly. "Back, Bruce, back!"

Sunny Boy stopped instantly. So did Bruce, who had followed him. Neither the little boy nor the dog could see why they should be shouted at, but they obeyed without question. And in a minute they saw a very good reason why. The stranger talking to Grandpa bent down and lifted a handle on a queer looking machine, and right

out of the grass—where no one could have seen it—rose a long ugly thing that looked like a big saw.

"All right, Sunny Boy!" called Grandpa.

"What is it?" asked Sunny, eyeing the long saw curiously.

"It's the mowing machine. We're going to cut hay with it presently," answered Grandpa. "Sites, this is Harry's son."

Mr. Sites shook hands with Sunny Boy, smiling down at him cheerfully.

"You don't say!" he drawled. "Well, youngster, your father and I went to school together. When's he coming up? I'd like to see him again."

"Daddy's coming next week, pretty soon," sang Sunny Boy, capering about the mowing machine joyously. "He wrote me a letter. May I sit on it, Grandpa?"

Sunny meant the seat of the mowing machine, and Grandpa lifted him in and held him while Mr. Sites harnessed up a pair of

fat white horses and Mr. Hatch appeared from somewhere. Sunny Boy was acquainted with Mr. Hatch. He was Araminta's father and did most of the farming for Grandpa. The Hatches lived in a yellow house down the road, and Araminta had six little brothers and sisters with whom Sunny sometimes played. So you see he was not lonely.

"Now we'll go over to the fence," said Grandpa, lifting him down, "and watch how the grass is cut. That saw-thing is the knife, and you must never go near a mowing machine unless you can see the knife sticking up. Little boys and dogs, and even men, can be very easily hurt if they are careless and don't watch the knife."

So Grandpa and Mr. Sites and Sunny Boy sat on the fence and Bruce lay down at their feet, while Mr. Hatch rode on the mowing machine round and round the field. The fat white horses did not hurry in the least,

but a wide light green path marked where the grass was being cut. Grandpa explained that when the sun had dried this grass it was called hay, and that Peter and Paul liked it to eat and to make their beds of in the winter. He promised Sunny Boy that he should help rake the hay the next afternoon.

Whr-rr! purred the mowing machine as Mr. Hatch turned and the fat white horses came toward them.

"Whoa!" the horses stopped suddenly.

Up came the long saw-knife, and Mr. Hatch jumped down from his seat and bent over, looking at something on the ground.

"He's found something," said Mr. Sites to Grandpa. "Wonder if it is—"

"Hey, Sunny! Sunny Boy! Oh, Sunny Boy!" Mr. Hatch waved his big straw hat wildly. "Come and see what I've got. Make Bruce stay there."

"I'll hold Bruce," said Mr. Sites. "You

two go on over. I'll bet a cookie I know what he's found."

Sunny Boy raced over the meadow, dragging Grandpa by the hand. Mr. Hatch had looked very near, but it was a very wide meadow if you tried to run across it.

"Hurry," sputtered Sunny Boy, red in the face with the excitement and heat.

"Am hurrying," grunted Grandpa. "You seem to forget about the bone in my leg!"

But Sunny Boy was too eager to see what Mr. Hatch had found to be sorry even for a grandfather with a bone in his leg.



CHAPTER IX

SUNNY BOY FORGETS

WHEN they reached the horses and the machine, the Something was around on the other side.

"Here, Sunny Boy, here's a sight for you," said Mr. Hatch mysteriously. "What do you think of this?"

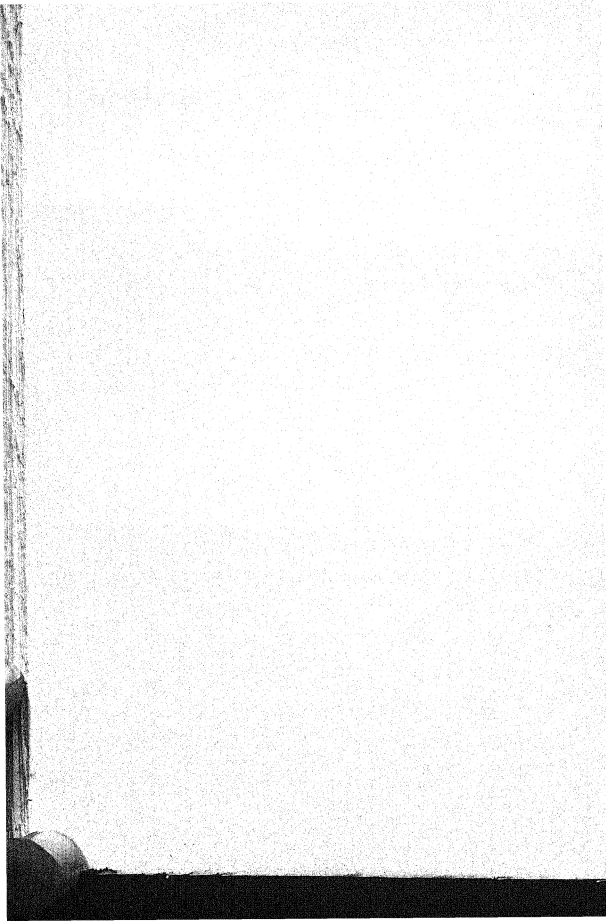
Sunny Boy bent down to look. There, in a hole in the ground, half-hidden by the tall grass all about it, were four little furry baby rabbits!

"Bunnies!" and Sunny plunged his two hands down into the middle of that furry bunch.

They snuggled closer, and their soft eyes looked frightened, but they did not try to run away.



He lifted one of the baby rabbits and placed it in Sunny's hands.



"Where's their mamma?" demanded Sunny Boy.

"The mower scared her off," said Mr. Hatch. "Pick one up—you won't hurt it—see, like this."

He lifted one of the baby rabbits and placed it in Sunny's hands. It wriggled uneasily, and he let it fall back into the nest. Mr. Hatch and Grandpa laughed.

"We'll leave them right here," declared Mr. Hatch kindly. "I'll mow around the nest, but not very near, and I guess the mother rabbit will come back to-night. Funny creatures, aren't they? Every year they have a nest in a grass field, and every year I come within an ace of cutting off their noses."

Sunny Boy and Bruce wandered back to the house alone. Grandpa was busy overhauling more machinery with Mr. Sites, and Jimmie was still busy with cabbages. Sunny was used to so much attention that he

felt rather put out when Araminta, sweeping the front porch, told him that Mother and Grandma had taken Peter and the buggy and had driven to Cloverways.

"They said I could go next time," grumbled Sunny Boy, not a bit sunnily. "Mother said so. 'Tain't fair."

"Don't say 'tain't," corrected Araminta, who was very careful of Sunny's grammar. "Say it isn't fair. Only it is—how could you go when you were down in the field with your grandpa?"

Sunny Boy felt that if Araminta had deserted him, there was no friend left. He went on into the house and wept a little, curled up in the big leather chair in the sitting room. He felt very sorry for himself.

But even a little boy whose mother and grandmother have gone away and left him can not feel sorry very long when a June breeze is ruffling the white curtains at the

window and there is a whole farm ready and waiting for him to come out and play. After a few big rain-drop tears and a sniff or two, Sunny Boy wiped his eyes on his "hanky," and decided that he would be brave and cheerful and then perhaps his family would be sorry to think how they had treated him.

He decided to make a kite and go out and fly it, the wind at the window making him think of kite-flying and the sight of a mass of papers on Grandpa's desk in one corner of the room suggesting what to make the kite of. He went over to the desk and climbed upon the chair standing before it.

Ordinarily Sunny Boy had a good memory. He could remember things for Mother and he seldom forgot where he had left his toys. But this morning a strange thing happened—his memory did not work at all. He forgot completely that Mother had told him not to touch other people's things without permission and that books

and papers were not to be opened or even unfolded unless one first asked.

Sunny Boy thrust a hand down among the papers on Grandpa's desk and pulled out two nice smooth brown pieces of paper that seemed strong and just exactly right for a kite. For good measure he took a letter or two, and then scurried out to the kitchen for string.

He had never made a kite, but he had often watched the boys in the park at home flying them, and he had a very good idea of how they were made. He had his own bottle of paste Mother had brought for him and he found the kind of sticks he wanted out in the yard. In half an hour he had the papers pasted smoothly over the sticks, a wiggly tail of crumpled papers from the waste-basket tied on, and yards and yards of string wound on a piece of wood. Sunny Boy was ready to sail his kite.

Araminta gave him a cookie and advised him to go down by the brook.

"There's more breeze there," she said. "But for mercy's sake don't fall in again. And come in when you hear me ring the bell."

Sunny Boy trudged down to the brook and started running with his kite as he had seen the boys do, to give it a good start. Up, up, it went, sailing high over his head, the crumpled paper tail wiggling in the wind.

"Jus' as good," said Sunny Boy to himself, "jus' as good."

He meant to say "Just as good as Archie Johnson's," Archie being one of the older boys who played in the park and who sailed elaborate kites. But Sunny had not tied the knots in his string tightly enough, and a strong puff of wind coming by, the cord parted and away sailed the kite, over the brook and into the woods!

"Ding-ling! Ding-ling! Ding-a-ling!" rang Araminta's bell.

It is often a good thing to be too busy to cry. Sunny Boy might have felt bad over the loss of his kite—indeed he watched it out of sight—but if he meant to cry the sound of the bell changed his mind. Instead, he ran up to the house as fast as he could go, and found Mother and Grandma waiting for him.

"Did you miss us?" asked his mother. "We knew you were having a good time, dear. Grandma has brought you a lolly-pop. What have you been doing to get so sun-burned?"

"Flying kites," stated Sunny Boy. "Thank you, Grandma. We found bunnies down in the field."

Grandpa came on the porch then, his glasses pushed up on his forehead.

"Mary, Olive, have either of you seen anything of those two five hundred dollar

bonds I had on my desk?" he said anxiously.

"They were there this morning, and when I came in from the mowing I couldn't find them. Have either of you used my desk?"

"No, Father," said Mrs. Horton.

"No, Arthur," said Grandma. "I'm sure Araminta hasn't been near the desk, either. Sunny, you weren't in the sitting room this morning, were you?"

"Yes, I was," chirped Sunny Boy.

"But you didn't see anything of Grandpa's bonds—his nice beautiful, Liberty Bonds, did you, dear?" asked Mrs. Horton.

"No, Mother."

"Well," Grandpa sighed, and turned to go in, "I'll look more thoroughly, of course. But they're gone—I'm sure of it. I had no business to be so careless. They should have been in the bank a week ago. They might have blown out of the window—I'll see that a screen goes in that window to-night."

Sunny Boy put down his lolly-pop and followed Grandpa into the house. He found him seated at the desk, the papers in great confusion all about him.

"Well, Sunny, did you come to help me hunt?" asked Grandpa. "Don't bother your yellow head about it. When you grow up, try to be more careful than your grandfather."

Sunny Boy slipped a warm little hand into Grandpa's.

"I made a kite—with papers," he confessed bravely. "Not Lib'ty Bonds, Grandpa, just papers on top of your desk. I was 'musing myself, and I had to have a kite."

"I see," said Grandpa slowly, and not a bit crossly. "What color paper, dear? White?"

"No, brown," replied Sunny Boy eagerly, sure now that he had not taken the missing bonds. "Just brown, Grandpa, and two old letters."

"Yes, I've copies of those—they don't matter," said Grandpa. "But we'd better get that kite, Namesake, because you've pasted my bonds on it, and a thousand dollars is a bit too expensive a kite even for my one and only grandson."

"But it flew off!" Sunny Boy began to cry. "The string broke, an' it went over the brook into the woods."

Mrs. Horton, coming into the sitting room to remind Sunny Boy to wash his face and hands before dinner, found her little boy crying as though his heart would break in Grandpa's arms.

"What in the world—" she began.

"There—there—it's all right," soothed Grandpa. "We're in a peck of trouble, Olive, because we took some papers from Grandpa's desk to make a kite with and now they turn out to be two Liberty Bonds. And the kite—like the pesky contrivance it is—got away and is hiding somewhere in the

woods. But we're going out right after dinner and hunt for it, aren't we, Sunny Boy?"

Sunny Boy felt Mother's kind hand smoothing his hair.

"Oh, my dear little boy!" said Mother's voice. "My dear little son! How could you? Didn't you know how wrong it was to touch a single thing on Grandpa's desk?"

"I forgot," said Sunny Boy in a very little voice.

"Why I wouldn't have believed that my Sunny Boy could forget," grieved Mother. "And now Grandpa's money is lost! And Daddy coming next week! What will he say?"

"We're going to find it long before Daddy comes," said Grandpa stoutly. "Right after dinner we're going over to the woods. Sunny can remember about where he thinks the kite fell. Cheer up, Olive—we're sorry we didn't remember about 'hands off' when

other people's property is about, but every one forgets once in a while. And I was careless—I'm as great a sinner as Sunny. And now forgive us both before we're quite drowned in our tears."

Mother and Sunny Boy had another little cry all to themselves upstairs and he told her that never, *never* would he touch anything that did not belong to him again without first asking. Then they both bathed their faces in clear cold water and felt better. No one mentioned bonds at dinner, and there was strawberry short-cake which Sunny Boy declared was as good as his favorite chocolate ice cream. And right after dinner he and Grandpa went out to hunt for the lost kite.

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CHAPTER X

GOING FISHING

BUT though Grandpa and Sunny Boy hunted and hunted and hunted, till it seemed as though they must have covered every inch of the big woods; though they searched the tangled thickets where the briery blackberry bushes grew along the edge of the brook; though they looked up at the trees till their necks ached, hoping perhaps to find the kite caught in the branches; still they had to come home without the precious Liberty Bonds.

"Never mind," said Grandpa, as they made their way toward home over a little pathway of stones tumbled together in the brook to make a bridge, "Never mind, Sunny. If we can't find them, we can't,

and there is no use in feeling bad about it any longer. You didn't mean to lose the bonds, we all know that, so we'll just stop crying over spilled milk and cheer up and be happy again."

But it was a very unhappy little boy who went to bed early that night—for the long tramp had tired him—and for several days after the loss of the kite Sunny Boy kept rather closely to the house.

He liked to be in the kitchen with Araminta or on the side porch with Grandma and Mother. Jimmie and Bruce tried to coax him to go with them, but he said politely that he didn't feel like it.

However, as the time drew near for his father's visit Sunny Boy cheered up, and by the morning that Daddy was expected he felt quite like his usually sunny self.

"Are you going to meet Daddy?" he asked Mother that morning, as he brushed his hair after she had parted it for him.

"I don't believe I'll go down," answered Mrs. Horton. "If you and Grandpa go, that will be enough and I'll be at the gate waiting for you."

"Daddy's coming!" Sunny Boy pounded his spoon against his bread and milk bowl.

"Sunny!" said Mother warningly.

"He's most here now!" and Sunny's feet hammered against the table so that the coffee pot danced a jig.

"Sunny Boy!" implored Grandma.

"I'm going to meet him!" This time Sunny Boy upset his glass of water with a wild sweep of his arm.

Grandpa pushed back his chair.

"I think we'd better start," he observed, "before a certain young man goes out of the window. If you're as glad as all this to think that Daddy's coming, what are you going to do when you really see him?"

But Sunny Boy was already out of the room and down at the gate where Jimmie

stood holding Peter and Paul already harnessed to the carryall.

"Let me feed 'em sugar," teased Sunny Boy. "Hold me up, Jimmie, I'm not 'fraid of their teeth now."

"You pile in," said Jimmie good-naturedly. "If you're going to meet that train, you want to start in a few minutes. Say, Sunny, what ails you this morning?" for Sunny Boy had gone around to the back of the carriage, scrambled up over the top of the second seat, and was now tumbling head first into the cushions of the front seat.

Grandpa came out in a more leisurely fashion and took the reins.

"All right, Jimmie, we're off. In case anything happens to the team, Sunny has enough push in him this morning to pull the carriage there and back."

Peter and Paul trotted briskly, and Sunny's tongue kept pace with their heels. His shrill little voice was the first thing Mr.

Horton heard, for the train had beaten them to the station after all, and as the carriage turned the corner of the street a familiar figure stood on the platform waving to them. Grandpa had to keep one hand on his grandson to prevent him from falling out over the wheels.

"Well, well, Son, isn't this fine!" Daddy had him in his arms almost before the horses stopped. "How brown you are! and yes, you've grown, too. I'll put the suitcase in—don't try to lift it."

Daddy put Sunny Boy down and turned and kissed Grandpa.

"You're his little boy!" Sunny thought out loud. It was the first time he had thought about it at all.

"I'm his daddy," said Grandpa proudly. "Pretty fine boy, all things considered, isn't he?"

Sunny Boy laughed because this was probably a joke. Anyway, Grandpa laughed

and so did Daddy. Then they all got into the carriage and Daddy drove Peter and Paul. How Mrs. Horton laughed when she saw them drive up to the gate, all three of them crowded together on the front seat.

"You three big boys!" she teased them. "I suppose you had so much to talk about that you had to be together."

Daddy put one arm around Mother and the other about Grandma.

"Make the most of me," he said gayly. "I can stay only three days."

Then there was a great to-do. Mother and Grandma had counted on having him for three weeks. Three days, as Mother said, was "no vacation at all."

"But better than nothing," Mr. Horton pointed out. "We can do a great deal in three days. And if I can't get up again, at least I'll come up to get you and Sunny when you're ready to go home."

Well, being sensible people and not given

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Well, being sensible people and not given

to "crying over spilled milk" (which was Grandpa's favorite proverb) they soon decided to enjoy every minute of Daddy's stay and to begin right away.

"Sunny and I are going fishing," announced Daddy firmly. "We'll go to-day—if Araminta can give us a lunch—and Mother is coming with us, if she wants to. Then to-morrow she and I are going for a long drive, and the last day I'm going to be a farmer and help Father with the work. Come on, Sunny, upstairs with you and get on high shoes. We don't go fishing in sandals and socks."

Araminta made them sandwiches and packed a box of lunch, putting in a whole apple pie. Daddy had brought his fishing rod with him, and he promised to make Sunny one as soon as they found a place to fish. Mother thought she would not go, for she was already tired from a long walk the day before. So Sunny Boy and Daddy set

off alone for the brook in the woods where the speckled trout lived.

"Shall I catch one?" asked Sunny Boy, scuffling along. He did like to scuffle his feet and Daddy did not seem to care how much noise he made. "Shall I fish?"

"Sure you'll fish," Daddy assured him. "Likely, you'll catch one, though you never can tell. A good sportsman doesn't growl even if he spends a whole day and doesn't catch one fish. We'll be good sports, sha'n't we?"

"Yes," agreed Sunny Boy. "But I would rather catch a fish."

Daddy laughed and began to whistle.

"Do you know Jimmie?" said Sunny Boy, running to keep up with him. "Do you know Jimmie and Mr. Sites and Araminta and David and Raymond and Juddy and Fred and Sarah and Dorabelle? Do you, Daddy?"

"I went to school with a boy named Jas-

par Sites," Daddy stopped whistling to answer. "Guess he's the same. Araminta helps Grandma—I know her, and Jimmie I've met before. But I must say the others haven't the pleasure of my acquaintance—who is Dorabelle, may I ask?"

"They're Araminta's brothers and sisters," explained Sunny Boy. "They live down the road. Let's fish now, Daddy."

"We will," agreed Mr. Horton. "You've picked out a good place. Now first I'll start you in, and then I'll try my luck."

He found a nice long branch for Sunny, and tied a fish-line to it. At the end of the line he fastened a bent pin with a bit of cracker on the point.

"There you are," he told him. "Now you sit out here on the dead roots of this tree that hangs over the bank, and you dangle the cracker in the water and keep very, very still. And perhaps a little fish on his way

to the grocery store for his mother will see the cracker and want a bite of lunch. Then you'll catch him."

Sunny Boy sat very still while Daddy baited a sharp thin hook with real bait and threw his line into the water, too. He sat down beside Sunny and together they waited.

"Daddy!" said Sunny Boy after a long while.

Mr. Horton raised a warning finger.

"But Daddy?" this after Sunny Boy had waited a longer time.

"You'll scare the fish," Mr. Horton whispered. "What is it?"

"My foot prickles!"

Mr. Horton took his line and whispered to him to get up and run about.

Sunny Boy's foot felt too funny for words, and at first he was sure it had dropped off while he had been sitting on it. He could not feel it at all. After stamping up and

down a few minutes the funny feeling went away, and he came back to his father and took his line.

"Your foot was asleep," said Mr. Horton in a low tone. "Don't sit on it again. Feel a nibble?"

Sunny Boy drew his line up and looked at it. There was nothing at all on the pin.

"Percy Perch must have taken that cracker when you weren't looking," said Mr. Horton, putting another cracker on. "Now watch out that Tommy Trout doesn't run off with this."

Sunny Boy waited and waited. A yellow butterfly came and sat down on a blade of grass near him. Sunny looked at it more closely—it was a funny butterfly—a funny butter—

Splash went his rod and line, but he never heard it. Sunny Boy was fast asleep, and Tommy Trout must have run away with the pin and the cracker because they were never

heard of again. When Sunny Boy opened his eyes again, his father was folding up his fishing tackle.

"Hello! You're a great fisherman!" Daddy greeted him. "See what we're going to take home to Mother to surprise her."

Sunny Boy rubbed his sleepy eyes. There on the grass lay four pretty little fish.

"Did you catch them?" he asked Daddy, who nodded.

"My land of Goshen!" said Sunny Boy.

"Where'd you pick that up?" demanded Daddy. "Do you think apple pie might help you to feel spryer?"

Sunny Boy was interested in pie, and he helped Daddy to spread the little white cloth on the ground. He had not known a picnic was part of the fun of fishing!

CHAPTER XI

THE HAY SLIDE

"DADDY," said Sunny Boy, as he munched a sandwich, lying on his stomach and looking down into the brook from the safe height of the bank, "how much is five hundred dollars?"

"A large sum of money," answered Mr. Horton, surprised. "Why, Son? What do you know about such things? Little boys shouldn't be bothering about money for years and years to come."

So Sunny told him about Grandpa's bonds and how he had lost them by pasting them on his kite. Mr. Horton was very sorry, but he said little.

"Only remember this, Sunny Boy," he insisted gravely. "I would rather you told me yourself than to have heard it from any

one else—even from Mother. When you've done anything good or bad that you think I should know, you tell me yourself, always. And now how about going wading?"

That was great fun. Sunny Boy rolled his trousers up as far as they would go and took off his shoes and stockings. The water was not deep, but, my! wasn't it cold? Little baby fish darted in and out, and ever so many times Sunny thought he had a handful of them. But when he unclosed his hands there was never anything in them but water, and not much of that.

"If I did catch a fish, could I keep him, Daddy?" Sunny asked. "I could carry home some brook for him to live in."

Sunny meant some of the brook water. Daddy explained that the baby fish, minnows they are called, would not be happy living in a bowl as the goldfish Sunny once had were.



"And you wouldn't want a fish to be unhappy, would you?" questioned Daddy. "Of course you wouldn't. But I'll tell you something better to do than trying to catch fish that only want to be left alone."

"Something to do with my shoes and stockings off?" stipulated Sunny anxiously. "I haven't been wading hardly a minute yet, Daddy."

Daddy laughed a little. He was lying flat on his stomach as Sunny had done, peering over the bank down at the water. He seemed to be having a very good time, did Daddy.

"This is something you can do without your shoes and stockings," he assured the small figure standing in the middle of the brook. "Indeed, I thought of it because you are all fixed for doing it. You know Mother was talking about her Christmas presents last night?"

Sunny nodded.

"She's sewing a bag for Aunt Bessie," he confided, "and Grandma is getting ready, too. But I think Christmas is about a year off, Daddy."

"Not a year—about five months," corrected Daddy. "That seems like a long time to you. But Mother likes to start early and make many of her presents. And a very good way it is, too. Well, Sunny Boy, I once heard Mother say that she would like to try making an indoor garden for some of her friends who live in apartments and have no gardens of their own. Only, Mother said, she must experiment first and find out what would grow best."

"What's an indoor garden?"

"Oh, there are different kinds," answered Daddy. "But I think the kind Mother is anxious to try is very simple. Just damp moss and a vine or two put into a glass bowl. They will grow and keep green all Winter and be pretty to look at."

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"I could get her some moss," said Sunny quickly. "See, those stones are all covered, Daddy."

"That's just what I want you to do," agreed Daddy. "We'll take plenty home to Mother and she can experiment with indoor gardens to her heart's content. See, Son, here's my knife. You must cut the moss very carefully in square pieces, and try not to break it. I'll be digging up some of these healthy little ground vines."

Sunny Boy was proud to be allowed to handle Daddy's big jack knife, and he was glad Daddy hadn't told him not to cut himself. Daddy, somehow, always trusted Sunny not to be heedless.

"Mother'll like it, won't she?" he called to Daddy, who was digging up a pretty, creeping green vine that grew in the grass near him. "Won't she be s'prised, Daddy?"

They worked busily, and soon Sunny had

a neat little pile of green moss ready to take home to Mother. After that he waded about in the brook, splashing the water with his bare feet.

"There—you've been in long enough," called Mr. Horton presently. "The water is too cold to play in it long. Come, Son, and put on your shoes and stockings."

Sunny Boy dabbled his feet in a little hole made by a stone he had pushed away.

"Sunny Boy!" called Mr. Horton once again.

Still Sunny Boy continued to play in the water. To tell the truth every one had been so anxious to make him happy at Brookside that he was the least little bit in the world spoiled. The more you have your own way, you know, the harder it is to do other people's way, and if you can do as you please day after day, by and by you want to do as you please all the time. Sunny Boy felt like that now.

"Sunny!" said Daddy a third time, very quietly.

Sunny Boy looked at him—and came marching out of the water. He was not very pleasant while Daddy helped him dry his feet and get into the despised shoes and stockings, but, when they were ready to start for home and Daddy tilted up his chin to look at him squarely, Sunny Boy's own smile came out.

"All right!" announced Daddy cheerfully. "Let's go home a different way and perhaps we'll find wild strawberries."

They did, too, a patch of them down at one end of the apple orchard, and Mr. Horton showed Sunny Boy how he used to string them on grass stems to take home to his mother when he was a little boy.

He certainly was a dear Daddy, and when he went back to the city Mother and Sunny had to be nicer to each other than ever because they missed him so very much.

"It's raining!" Sunny Boy stood at the window after breakfast, the morning after Mr. Horton had gone back to the city. "Does it rain in the summer?"

Grandma laughed, and told him that indeed it did rain in the summer.

"We haven't had a drop of rain since you've been here, and you must have brought fair weather with you," she said. "Now that the hay is all in the barn, we're glad to see it rain, for the garden needs it badly. Think how thirsty the flowers and vegetables must be."

"Harriet said to play in the barn on rainy days," said Sunny Boy sadly, "but I think I'm lonesome."

"Well, you go out to the barn and you won't be lonesome," Araminta, who was clearing the breakfast table, laughed at his long face. "I'll bet all the children are there, even the baby. He can go, can't he, Mrs. Horton?"

Grandma said yes, of course he could, and Mother brought his rubbers and raincoat downstairs when she came, for he met her on the stairs and there she had them all ready.

"Run along and have a good time," she told him, kissing him. "I was going to suggest that you play in the barn this morning. Help Jimmie if he's working, won't you, and don't hinder him?"

Paddling out to the barn in the pouring rain was fun. But the barn was the most fun of all. Grandpa and Jimmie were on the first floor mending harness, and the doors were open so that they could see right out into the orchard and yet not get a bit wet. Just as Araminta had said, all the Hatch children were there, even the baby, who lay asleep on the hay in a nice, quiet corner.

"Hurrah!" cried Juddy Hatch. "We're going to play robbers, and you can be in my cave."

"Be in my cave," urged David, his brother. "Our side has the best slide."

"I'll come up there and settle you youngsters if you're going to quarrel," threatened Jimmie, switching a buggy whip and looking very fierce. "You'd better start playing and stop arguing."

The children knew Jimmie had small patience with little bickerings, though he had never been known to do anything more severe than scold. So they took him at his word and began to play.

"You be on Juddy's side, then," agreed David. "See, we each have a cave here in the hay—that's mine in this corner. The way we do is to all go into our caves and take turns creeping up. When you hear us on the roof of your cave, you have to get out and run over to ours, climb up to the top and slide down the other side. If you're caught you have to b'long to our robber tribe."

The hay was very smooth and slippery,

and the children had many a tumble as the two robber tribes chased each other across the haymow. Such shrieks of laughter, such howls as the robbers in their excitement sometimes forgot and pulled a braid of Sarah's or Dorabelle's! The baby continued to sleep placidly through all the noise, and Jimmie told Grandpa that he thought perhaps "the poor little kid was deaf!" Jimmie was only fooling, of course, for the Hatch baby was not deaf at all.

It was Sunny Boy's turn to be chased, and as he heard David's robber tribe beginning to climb up on the roof of his cave he dashed out and ran for the other cave at the end of the haymow. Up the side he went, and down. Dorabelle was captured in that raid and had to go over to David's side.

"Now I've got four in my tribe," crowed the robber chief. "Get your men together, Jud, and we'll do it again."

"Where's Sunny Boy?" demanded Juddy,

counting his tribe. "He was here—I saw him climb up the top of the cave. Sunny Boy! Sun-ny!"

No Sunny Boy answered.

"Jimmie, is Sunny Boy down there with you?" Juddy peered over the edge of the haymow where Jimmie sat mending the harness. Grandpa had gone to the house, declaring that there was a little too much noise in the barn for his rheumatism.

"Haven't seen him," answered Jimmie. "Isn't he up there with you?"

Juddy's lip began to quiver. He was only eight years old.

"Then he's lost," he said. "He isn't here at all, Jimmie."

Jimmie dropped his harness and ran up the little ladder that led to the haymow.

"Nonsense!" he declared sharply. "A boy can't get lost with a roof over him. Likely enough he's hiding for fun. Sunny! Sunny Boy, where are you?"

But no Sunny Boy answered. And though Jimmie and the Hatch children turned over the hay and looked in every corner of the haymow, they could not find him.

"Shall I go and tell Mr. Horton?" suggested David, who was the oldest of the Hatch boys.

"Not till we have something to tell," was Jimmie's answer. "Where was he when you saw him last?"

"Right over in that corner," said Juddy, pointing. "I saw him going over the top of the cave, an' then I ducked under, and when David got Dorabelle he just wasn't here."

"He must be here—somewhere," retorted Jimmie impatiently. "I'm going to look once more—and if he's just hiding, won't I shake him!"

Jimmie climbed over the top of the "robber's cave," as Sunny Boy had done, and down on the other side. The children heard

him scuffling about, kicking the hay with his feet, and then suddenly he gave a shout.

"You stay where you are till I come back," he called. "You David, and Juddy, keep the others where they are. I'll bet I've found him."

The Hatch children were fairly dancing to follow Jimmie, but they knew he meant what he said. They sat down in the hay to wait.

One-two-three-four-five minutes passed. Then Jimmie stepped out on the barn floor and grinned cheerfully up at the anxious group perched on the edge of the haymow.

"It's all right," he said. "I've found him. He's out in the old dairy. Now don't all come down at once—Jud, let the girls come first. Easy there!"

The Hatch children came tumbling down, eager to see Sunny Boy. Sarah stopped to pick up the baby, who had slept through all the excitement and now merely opened two

dark eyes, smiled, and went to sleep again. The Hatch baby was used to being taken about and had the steady habits of an old traveler.

They found Sunny absorbed in watching a mother duck and her ten little ducklings who were swimming daintily about in a trough in the dairy.

"Well, where were you?" Juddy pounced on Sunny Boy. "You gave us an awful scare."

"I've been right here all the time." Sunny was a bit aggrieved to find such a fuss made over him. First Jimmie and now Juddy. "I haven't been anywhere," he insisted.

"We thought you were lost!" David frowned at him severely.

"Well, I wasn't," retorted Sunny Boy briefly. "I was watching ducks. Jimmie, do they sleep in water?"

"What, ducks?" said Jimmie. "Oh, no,

they sleep under their mother just like chickens at night, some place where it is warm and dry. Your grandmother will be glad you found this duck—she's missed her for two days. Guess she never thought of looking in the dairy."

This part of the barn had been used for the cows, you see, years before, when Sunny's father was a little boy and a big herd of fine cows were kept at Brookside. Now Mrs. Butterball and Butterette were the only cows, and they lived in a box stall near Peter and Paul.

CHAPTER XII

APPLE PIES

SUNNY BOY continued to look at the ducks till David could stand it no longer.

"What happened to you?" he asked, jogging Sunny's elbow to make him look at him. "How'd you get down here?"

"Fell down," said Sunny calmly. "Could I have a duck to play with, Jimmie?"

"How'd you fall down?" persisted David, who usually got what he started after.

Sunny Boy was exceedingly bored by these numerous questions, and he wanted to be allowed to watch the ducks in peace. So he decided the easiest way to get rid of

David and the others would be to tell them what they wanted to know.

"I'll show you," he said. "Come on."

He led them out of the dairy into a little cobwebby room, and pointed up to a square opening.

"I slid through that—see?" he demanded.

"Did it hurt?"

"Course not—I fell on the hay."

The floor was thickly covered with old, dusty hay.

"It's the room where we used to throw down hay to feed the cows," explained Jimmie. "They covered it over with loose boards when they put in the hay three or four years ago. But I suppose you youngsters when romping around kicked the boards to one side and the hay with it. Sunny, coasting down the side of the cave, just coasted right on through the hole and landed down here. Lucky there was hay enough on the floor to save him a bump."

"But why didn't you come and tell us?" asked David. "Here we've been looking all over for you. Why didn't you sing out?"

"I was going to," admitted Sunny Boy apologetically. "But when I was hunting for the way into the barn, I found the ducks. Let's go and tell Grandma we saw 'em."

It was noon by this time, so the Hatch children went home and Sunny Boy and Jimmie walked together to the house. It had stopped raining, and the sun felt warm and delightful.

"Of course you may have a duck," said Grandma, when Sunny Boy told her of his find. "That foolish old mother duck marched off with her children one morning and I couldn't for the life of me discover where she had gone. And Grandpa must board over that hole if you are going to play in the haymow. Another time you might hurt yourself, falling like that."

"Where's Mother?" asked Sunny Boy, eager to tell her about the morning's fun.

"I believe she is up in the attic," returned Grandma. "She's been up there for an hour or so. I wish, lambie, you'd run and find her and say dinner will be on the table in half an hour."

Sunny climbed the crooked, steep stairs that led to Grandma's attic, and found Mother bending over an old trunk dragged out to the middle of the floor.

"Mother," he began as soon as he saw her, "we've been sliding on the hay, and I found a duck mother, an' Grandma gave me a duck for my own. What are you doing, Mother?"

Mrs. Horton was sitting on the floor, her lap filled with a bundle of old letters.

"I've been having a delightful morning, too," she said. "Grandma started to go over these old trunks with me, and then some one called her on the telephone and she

had to go down. See, precious, here is a picture of Daddy when he was a little boy."

Sunny looked over her shoulder and saw a photograph of a stiff little boy in stiff velvet skirt and jacket, standing by a table, one small hand resting solemnly on a book.

"He doesn't look comfy," objected Sunny. "Is it really Daddy? And did little boys wear petticoats then, Mother?"

"That isn't a petticoat, it is a kilt," explained Mother. "You know what kilts are, dear—you've seen the Scotch soldiers wear them. Well, when Daddy was a little boy they wore kilts, and trousers underneath. And Grandma was telling me this morning that as soon as Daddy was out of her sight he would take off his kilt and go about in his blouse and trousers. So probably he considered the kilt a petticoat just as you do."

Sunny wandered over to another trunk

that stood open and poked an inquiring hand down into its depths.

"What's this, Mother?" he asked, holding up a queer, square little cap.

"Be careful, precious, that is Grandpa's Civil War trunk," warned Mother, coming over to him. "Grandmother meant to put the things out to air to-day and then it rained. See, dear, this is the cap he wore, and the old blue coat, and this is his knapsack. Some day you must ask Grandpa to come up here with you and tell you war stories."

"Where's his sword?" asked Sunny, fingering the cap with interest. "Where was Daddy then? Was Grandpa shot?"

"Grandpa didn't have a sword, because he wasn't an officer," explained Mother. "He was only a boy when he enlisted, and it was long before there was any Daddy, dear. And Grandpa was wounded—I'm sure I've told you that before—don't you re-

member? That's how he met Grandma. She was a little girl and met him in the hospital where her father, who was a physician, was attending Grandpa."

"Olive! Sunny! Dinner's ready!" It was Grandma standing at the foot of the stairs and calling them.

"I forgot to tell you," said Sunny hastily. "Dinner will be on the table in half an hour, Grandma said."

Mrs. Horton smiled.

"I think the half hour has gone by," she declared, closing the lid of Grandpa's trunk. "Come, dear, we must go right down and not keep them waiting."

"Are you going to eat your duck?" asked Grandpa, when they were seated at the dinner table.

"My, no!" answered Sunny Boy, shocked.

He never believed that the chickens and ducks they had for Sunday dinners were the same pretty feathered creatures he saw walk-

ing about the farm. Chickens and ducks one ate, thought Sunny Boy, were always the kind he remembered hanging up in the markets at home—without any feathers or heads. He was sure they grew that way, somewhere.

"He doesn't have to eat his duck," comforted Grandma. "I'm going to make something he likes this afternoon. If you and Olive are going to drive over to town, Sunny and I will be busy in the kitchen."

"Saucer pies!" cried Sunny Boy. "I can help, can't I, Grandma?"

If there was one thing Sunny Boy loved to do, it was to be allowed to watch his grandma bake pies. He could ask a hundred questions and always be sure of an answer, he could taste the contents of every one of the row of little brown spice boxes, and, best of all, there was a special little pie baked for him in a saucer that he could eat the minute it was baked and cool. No wonder Sunny Boy kissed Mother contentedly

and watched her drive away with Grandpa for a little shopping in town. He, Sunny Boy, was going to help Grandma bake apple pies.

"Here's your chair, and here's a pound Sweeting for you," Araminta greeted him as he trotted into the kitchen.

Sunny Boy scrambled into his place opposite Grandma at the white table.

"Now this won't be a very good pie," said Grandma, as she began to mix the pie crust.

Dear Grandma always said that about her pies, even the one that won the prize at the big fair.

"These apples are too sweet. But your grandfather can never wait. He has to have an apple pie the minute the first apple ripens."

"So do I," announced Sunny Boy. "What's in this little can, Grandma?"

"Cinnamon, lambie," answered Grandma. "Don't sniff it like that—you'll sneeze."

Sunny Boy munched his apple and watched her as she rolled out the crust.

"How many, Grandma?" he asked.

Araminta, peeling apples over by the window, laughed.

"He's just like his grandfather," she said.

"Mr. Horton always says, 'How many pies are you going to make, Mother?' doesn't he?"

"Why does Grandpa call you Mother?" inquired Sunny Boy of Grandma. "You're not his mamma."

"No. But you see I suppose when your daddy was a little chap around the house, and calling me 'Mother' sixty times a day, as you do your mamma, Grandpa got in the habit of saying 'Mother,' too. And habits, you know, Sunny Boy, are the funny little things that stay with us."

"Yes, I know—we had 'em in Sunday school," agreed Sunny absently. "Is that my pie?"

"That's your pie, lambie," declared Grandma, smiling. "One, two, three large ones, and a saucer pie for my own laddie. How much sugar shall I put in for you, Sunny Boy?"

"A bushel," replied Sunny Boy confidently. "Let me shake the brown powder, Grandma."

So Sunny Boy sprinkled in the cinnamon, and Grandma added dots of butter and put on the crust. Then she cut little slits in it "so the apples can breathe" and then that pie was ready for the oven.

"Now I'm going up to change my dress while they're baking," said Grandma, taking off her apron. "If you want to stay here with Araminta, all right, Sunny. I'll be back in time to take the pies out."

Araminta bustled about, washing the table top and putting away the salt and sugar and spice box and all the things Grandma had used for her baking. Sunny Boy ate

his apple quietly and waited for Grandma to come back.

"My land of Goshen!" Araminta stopped to peer out of the window over the sink. "Here's company driving in. If it isn't Mrs. Lawyer Allen, and she always stays till supper time! And your Grandma's pies not out of the oven!"

Grandma, too, had seen the gray horse and buggy, and she hurried down in her pretty black and white dress.

"Hook my collar, please, Araminta," she whispered. "And I am sure the pies are done. You can take them out very carefully and set them where they'll cool. You'll be good, won't you, lambie? There goes the door-bell."

Grandma rustled away to meet her company, and Araminta opened the oven door importantly. She was seldom trusted to take the pies from the oven alone, and she felt very grown-up indeed to have Sunny

Boy see her do it. She got the three pies out nicely, and the little saucer pie, too, and carried them into the pantry to cool. She set them on a shelf over the flour barrel.

"Grandma puts them on the table," suggested Sunny Boy.

"Well, I put them on the shelf," said Araminta shortly. "I don't believe in leaving pies around where any one can get 'em."

Now Araminta was in a hurry to go home, for it was three o'clock, and every afternoon from three to five she was allowed to spend as she pleased. So, though she made the kitchen nice and neat before she left, in her hurry she forgot to put the lid on the flour barrel, something Grandma always did.

"I'm going," said Araminta, putting on her hat with a jerk. "Mind you don't get into any mischief, and don't go bothering your grandma. Mrs. Lawyer Allen is nervous, and she doesn't like children."

Araminta, you see, had so many brothers

and sisters younger than herself that she gave advice to every child she met.

Sunny Boy was perfectly willing to be good, but he was equally determined to have his saucer pie. It was his own pie, made and intended for him, and Araminta had no business to put it on a shelf out of his reach. As soon as the kitchen door closed he got a chair and dragged it into the pantry.

"It's mine," he told himself, as he stood on the chair.

He pushed a white bowl out of the way, for he remembered the yellow custard he had knocked over on his first adventure in Grandma's pantry. He put his hand on his pie and had it safe when Bruce began to bark suddenly outside the window. Sunny Boy leaned over to see out the window, the chair tipped, and with a crash a frightened little boy fell into the flour barrel which the careless Araminta had left uncovered directly under the shelf.

The noise of the falling chair brought Grandma and her visitor to the pantry.

"What in the world!" cried Mrs. Allen, as a small white-faced figure stared at her over the edge of the barrel. "What is it?"

"It's me," said Sunny Boy forlornly. "There's flour all in me, Grandma!"

Grandma had to laugh.

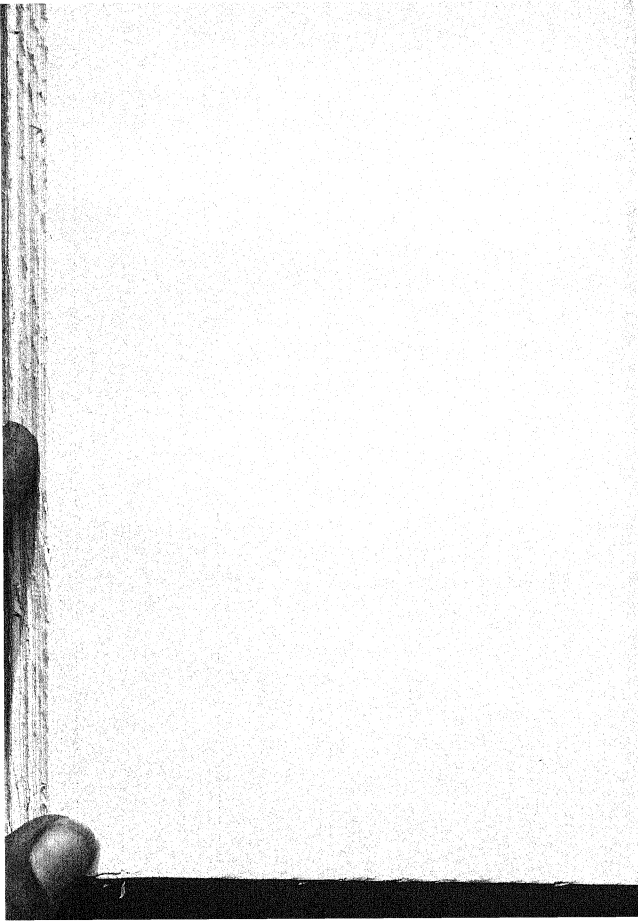
"All over you," she corrected. "My dear child, are you hurt? And what were you doing to get in the barrel?"

Grandma lifted Sunny Boy out and carried him to the back porch and told him to shake himself as Bruce did after swimming in the brook. Only, instead of water, clouds of flour came out of Sunny Boy's clothes as he tried to shake like a dog.

"I was getting my saucer pie, Grandma," he explained when she came back with a whisk-broom and began to brush him vigorously. "If I had some cinnamon I'd be a pie, wouldn't I?"



With a crash a frightened little boy fell into the flour barrel.



CHAPTER XIII

MORE MISCHIEF

WHEN Grandma finally had Sunny Boy all dusted free from flour, she asked him if he thought he could keep out of mischief till supper time.

He was sure he could, and ran off to find Jimmie while Grandma and Mrs. Allen went back to finish their interrupted visit.

"Hello, Sunny," Jimmie greeted him. Jimmie was mending a piece of the orchard fence. "What are you eating—pie?"

For Grandma had seen to it that Sunny had his saucer pie—grandmas are like that, you know.

"Want a bite?" asked Sunny.

But Jimmie, it seemed, had been eating

apples all the afternoon and he did not care for apple pie.

"Let me help," urged Sunny. "I can hold the fence up, Jimmie."

"You can stay around and talk, if you want to," conceded Jimmie. "It's kind of lonesome working all alone. But, Sunny, honestly I can't mend this fence if you are going to sit on it and wiggle."

Sunny slid down hastily.

"I didn't know I was wiggling," he apologized. "Do you learn to mend fence at agri—agri—"

"Agricultural college?" supplied Jimmie. "No, I guess that comes natural. Will you hand me one of those long nails, please?"

Sunny handed the nail absently. He was thinking of other things.

"Are you a farmer like Grandpa, Jimmie?" he asked.

Jimmie finished pounding in his nail before he answered.

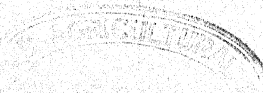
"Seems like I tinker up this section of fence every other week," he confided. "Am I a farmer like your grandpa? Well, no, not yet, but I aim to be. You thinking of farming, too?"

Sunny considered this gravely.

"I might be a farmer," he admitted. "Only I think I would rather be a postman. Could I, Jimmie?"

"Of course," encouraged Jimmie. "Nothing to stop you. And if, when you grow up, you find you would rather be something else, why, there's no harm done. I've heard that your father wanted to drive a hansom cab for a life job when he was your age. And now, instead, he drives his own automobile."

"I think," announced Sunny thoughtfully, "it's a good plan to think about what you want to be when you grow up and then you won't be s'prised when you find out what you are."



Jimmie's mouth was too full of nails for him to answer, but he nodded.

"You'll swallow a nail," worried Sunny. "Our dressmaker did, once. Only it was a pin. What is this for, Jimmie?"

"Wire clippers," explained Jimmie briefly. "Cut wires with 'em, you know. Leave them right there, Sunny."

Jimmie was wrestling with a bit of wire that was hard to stretch into place. Sunny picked up the wire clippers and studied them carefully.

"I wonder how they work?" he said to himself. "Like Mother's scissors? If I only had a piece of wire I could see."

Now the only wires, as Sunny very well knew, were those stretched between the posts. He did so wonder if the wire clippers really could cut that thick wire! Jimmie's back was toward him. Sunny rested the clippers on the top wire. He wouldn't really press them, just pretend to.

Snip! the heavy strand of wire parted as though it had been a string.

"Give me those clippers!" Jimmie bore down upon him crossly. "I told you to leave 'em alone. Now see what you've done! Look here, Sunny, can't you keep out of trouble long enough for me to finish this fence?"

Sunny yielded the clippers reluctantly. He had not known they were so sharp. Jimmie need not have been so cross, he thought.

"I want to do something different," Sunny complained.

Jimmie wisely decided to give him something to do.

"Couldn't you drive that mother duck and her ducklings up to the chicken yard?" he asked, pointing to the same ducks Sunny had discovered in the dairy. "I know your grandmother wants to shut them up to-night and that mother duck is just working her way

down to the brook. I want to finish this fence before I call it a day, so if you want to be useful, here's your chance."

Of course Sunny Boy wanted to be useful, and he started after Mother Duck and her family. If you have ever tried to argue with a duck you will know that it does no good to tell her where she should go—ducks are like some people, they like to have their own way. This mother duck had made up her mind that she was going to take her family down to the brook, and Sunny Boy had to race up and down the orchard and "shoo" her from behind trees and be patient a long time before he could get her started in the direction of the chicken yard. Then, once out of the orchard, she caught a glimpse of Araminta, who had come back—for it was five o'clock—and was scattering cracked corn for the chickens. The duck mother was hungry, and she started to run toward the chicken yard. Sunny Boy could

scarcely keep up with her, and the poor little baby ducks were left away behind.

"Let 'em be—they'll follow her!" cried Araminta, and she scattered a little corn in an empty coop.

The duck mother waddled right inside, and Araminta put up a bar that fastened her in.

"I think she has too many duck babies," said Sunny Boy, watching as the ducklings came up to the coop and began to hunt for corn.

"Yes, she has," agreed Araminta. "But she can keep them all warm, I guess."

"I know what I can do," suggested Sunny Boy, but Araminta was hurrying to the house after bread and milk to feed the duck babies and she did not ask him what he could do.

Mrs. Allen stayed to supper, and very soon after Mrs. Horton said that Sunny Boy looked sleepy and must go to bed. He seldom took a nap any more, and as he woke up

early in the mornings, his mother said it was certain that he must go to bed earlier to make up for it.

All the time Mother was helping him undress, Sunny Boy was very quiet, and after she had kissed him and tucked him in bed he did not ask her for a story as he usually did.

"You've been playing too hard, I think," said Mrs. Horton. "Good night and pleasant dreams, dearest."

Sunny Boy waited till she had closed the door. Then he hopped out of bed and pattered over to another door that led into Grandma's room. When he came back he had two baby ducks in his hands.

"There now, you can sleep in my bed," he told them, putting them down under the sheet.

But the baby ducks did not like the soft, clean bed. They made funny little peeping noises, and as soon as Sunny Boy climbed into bed, one of them fell out and ran across

the floor. Sunny Boy chased it under the bureau, and then he heard Mother calling.

"Sunny!"

He opened the door a crack.

"Yes, Mother?"

"I hear you running around up there. You don't want Mother to have to come up and punish you, do you? Go back to bed and go to sleep like a good boy."

"Yes'm," said Sunny.

He might have explained that he was good, but the ducks were certainly as bad as they could be. It was still light enough in the room for him to see the furniture, but try as he might he could not get that foolish, obstinate frightened little duck to come out from behind the bureau. Finally he gave it up and went to bed to take care of the other one, and that fell or jumped out on the other side of the bed and poor Sunny had to get up again and try to find it. The foolish

thing let him chase it under the bed, and he was half way under and half way out when Grandpa opened the bedroom door.

"Look here, Sunny, what are you up to now?" began Grandpa. "Your mother is tired and she sent me up to settle you. My soul, boy! what are you doing under the bed?"

Sunny Boy wriggled out and turned a flushed face to Grandpa.

"Nothing," he said, beginning to climb into bed.

Grandpa was helping him smooth the tangled covers when one of the ducks began to peep.

"What's that?" said he sharply. "Sunny, what have you got in here? What's that noise?"

"It's a duck," confessed Sunny Boy reluctantly.

Grandpa sat down on the bed.

"A duck? Up here?" he gasped.

"Why, how on earth did a duck get in the house?"

"I did it," admitted Sunny. "The duck mother had too many children, and I was going to take care of some of 'em for her. But they wouldn't stay in bed. I could sail 'em in the bath-tub in the mornings."

Grandpa began to laugh, and then he could not stop. He laughed till the tears came, and Mrs. Horton heard him and came up to scold them both. Grandma followed, and there they all sat on the bed, Grandpa and Mother and Grandma, all laughing as hard as they could.

Sunny Boy did not think it was funny a bit, and when he found that Grandpa was going to take his ducks back to their own mother that night he began to cry.

"By and by they would like it here," he sobbed. "I haven't my woolly dog, and I need a duck. Can't I have one, Grandpa?"

Sunny Boy was far from being a cry-baby,

but he was sleepy and that made him feel unhappy, though he thought it was the ducks. That's a trick of the sandman's—making you cry easily when you're sleepy. However this time Grandpa was firm, and he managed to get the duck under the bed and the one back of the bureau and carry them down to their mother. And very glad they were to get there, we may believe. Sunny Boy went to sleep in five minutes, and long before morning had forgotten he ever wanted baby ducks to spend the night with him.

One morning, a week or more later, he was playing on the shady side porch when he heard Grandpa saying something to Mother about bonds. Ever since Sunny Boy had lost his kite and Grandpa's bonds with it, he always noticed when any one used that word. No one ever spoke to him about the lost money, and he often forgot about it, with so many wonderful things to do

every day. And then, a word or two would make him remember again.

"I lie awake at night worrying over those bonds, Father," Mrs. Horton was saying. "Harry may be able to make it up to you some day, but he's having a hard time this summer. I've been out and looked and looked—some one must have picked them up."

"Yes, I suppose they have," said Grandpa. "I advertised, and the Bonds were numbered. Still, as you say, some one must have found them. Don't let it spoil your Summer, Olive, I've only myself to blame. At my age carelessness is nothing short of a crime."

"But at your age a thousand dollars is a great deal to lose," protested Mrs. Horton. "And I know you meant to take a trip South this Winter, and Harry tells me you've given that up."

Sunny Boy could hear tears in Mother's

soft voice, and he was sure she had tears in her lovely brown eyes. He made up his mind what to do.

He trotted through the wide hall, into the sitting-room. There sat Grandpa figuring at his desk and close beside him was Mother with her knitting. There were bright drops on the dark blue wool. She had been crying, though she smiled at Sunny as he stood in the doorway.

"Grandpa, listen!" Sunny Boy cried. "You can have all the money in my bank at home. I've been saving it for, oh, ever so long. There's a thousand dollars, I guess. An' you can have it all—every bit. Daddy will send it to you if I ask him. An' then you won't care 'bout the Lib'ty Bonds!"

Sunny Boy was surprised at the way his offer was received. He had thought Grandpa would be pleased and his mother, too. And here sat Grandpa blowing his nose, and as for his mother—Sunny Boy

looked at her and her eyes were quite brimming over.

"Don't you like me to?" he cried. "I was going to buy another drum, but Grandpa can have the money. It's a pink pig, Grandpa, and you shake it an' the pennies drop out. Harriet gave it to me." Sunny Boy's lip began to quiver.

"My dear little son!" Mother held out her arms and Sunny Boy ran to her. "My generous little man!" she whispered. "Your pennies wouldn't be enough, precious. But I'm proud to have you offer them to Grandpa to try to make up his loss. That's like your father."

Sunny Boy sat up and stopped crying. To be like his father was the highest praise his mother could give him.

"Thank you very much, Sunny," said Grandpa gravely. "I couldn't take your bank. For one reason, we're not sure yet the bonds are really lost. But I tell you

what I will do—if I ever get out of cash, entirely out, mind you, and have to borrow from my friends, I'll come to you. There are very few I'd bring myself to borrow from, but perhaps it's different with a grandson. You save your pennies, and maybe some day I'll ask you to lend me some. Shall we shake hands on it?"

And Sunny Boy and Grandpa shook hands solemnly, like two business men.

CHAPTER XIV

ANOTHER HUNT

“**A**ND now,” declared Grandpa, putting on his wide-brimmed hat and reaching for his cane, “it’s high time I was out looking after Mr. Hatch. Where are you going, Sunny Boy?”

Sunny Boy was darting off as though a new idea had seized him.

“Out,” he answered vaguely. His mind was intent on his plan.

“Well, Grandma and I have the picnic to plan,” cried Mrs. Horton gayly. “If we are going to have that long-promised picnic before we go home, I for one think it is high time we set a day.”

Sunny Boy, lingering in the doorway, heard Grandpa grumble a little as he always

did if anything was said about their going home.

"No reason why you shouldn't stay here all Summer," he scolded. "Or if you want to be nearer Harry, Olive, leave the boy with us. You know we'd take good care of him."

"I know you would; but I couldn't leave my baby," Mrs. Horton said quickly. "Bessie, my sister, you know, has a plan—"

But Araminta called Sunny just then and he ran off without hearing about Aunt Bessie's plan.

Sunny Boy had a plan of his own, and he was determined to carry it through. This was nothing less than to go and hunt for Grandpa's lost Liberty Bonds.

"For I know that kite fell down right by the old walnut tree," said Sunny Boy to himself for the twentieth time. "I saw it go down—swish! I'll bet Grandpa didn't look under the right tree."

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Without much trouble he coaxed a big piece of gingerbread from Araminta—who was very curious to learn where he was going—which he crowded into his pocket. Expecting to be gone a long time, he took an apple from the basket on the dining-room table and two bananas. Bruce, lying on the back door mat, decided to go with him, but Bruce was beginning to get the least little bit fat and old, and when he had followed Sunny as far as the brook pasture and saw that he had no intention of stopping to rest under the trees, that wise collie dog turned and went back to the house.

“Hey, there! Where are you going this hot day?” Jimmie, setting out tomato plants in a side field, shouted to him.

Sunny Boy waved his hand and plodded on. He was a silent child when he had his mind fixed on a certain thing, and he was intent on finding those bonds this morning.

The sun was hot, and when he reached the

pretty brook the water looked so clear and cool that Sunny was tempted to go wading. Only he had promised his mother not to go in the water unless some one was with him, and then, too, wading would delay the hunt for the bonds. He walked along the bank until he came to the uneven line of stones piled together to make a crossing.

"I spect it wabbles," said Sunny Boy aloud, putting one foot on a stone, which certainly did "teeter."

He started to cross slowly, and in the middle of the stream his right foot slipped—splash!—into the icy cold water.

"My land sakes!" gasped poor Sunny Boy, who was certainly acquiring a number of new words, much to his mother's worry. "I guess that water's as cold as—as our ice-box at home."

With one wet foot and one dry foot he finished his journey and landed safely on the other side of the brook. He was hungry

by then, and so sat down to eat the gingerbread under a large tree whose roots had grown far out over the water.

"Tick-tack! Tick-tack! Tick—t-a-c-k!" scolded some one directly over his head.

"Don't be cross, Mr. Squirrel!" said Sunny Boy politely. "Grandpa says when you make a noise like that you're either frightened or want folks to go away and not bother you. I'm going in a minute."

Throwing the crumbs of the gingerbread into the brook for the little fish to enjoy, Sunny Boy marched straight for the woods. He had never been there alone, and somehow they seemed darker and deeper than he remembered them when Grandpa or Daddy had been with him.

"I'll begin to look now," said Sunny, talking to himself for company. And how small his voice sounded, and thin, under those tall, silent trees!

"Maybe I'll see a Brownie," Sunny con-

tinued. "I think Bruce might have come all the way. What was that?"

A twig snapped under his foot with a sharp noise. Noises are always creepy when one is alone in a strange place. Sunny sat down to rest a minute, on a half-buried tree-stump.

A black beetle came out, ran along a weed-stalk, climbed up to the top and sat there, regarding Sunny steadily.

"Do you like living here?" asked Sunny politely. "I wish you could talk, Mr. Beetle. Maybe you've seen the Lib'ty Bonds somewhere an' you'd tell me just where to look."

The beetle winked his beady eyes rapidly, but of course he didn't say a word.

Presently a striped chipmunk appeared on a stump opposite the one where Sunny sat, and he, too, stared at Sunny intently.

"I'm going! I'm going right away!" Sunny assured the chipmunk hastily.

"Daddy says you wood folks like to be alone. I wouldn't hurt you, but I s'pose you don't know that."

He trotted along, eating the bananas as he went. There were so many things to look at and think about that sometimes he almost forgot the Liberty Bonds. Almost, but not quite.

"'Cause I just have to find 'em," he told a blue jay that sat up in a tree and listened sympathetically. "I'm mose sure Grandpa didn't look in the right place. An' won't he like it when I come home with them in my pocket!"

Sunny was so pleased with this idea that he gave a little shout and threw his cap up into the air, which so alarmed the blue jay that it quickly flew away.

Sunny Boy was marching steadily, hands in his pockets, when he saw something near a stone that made him stop to look. It was a turtle.

"Why didn't you run?" Sunny demanded, picking up the turtle carefully, as he had seen Jimmie do. "Maybe you're the one Grandpa carved his initials and the date on when he came here to live. Are you?"

The turtle kept his head obstinately in. Very likely he objected to being picked up and looked at so closely. Sunny brushed him off neatly with his clean handkerchief, and, sure enough, on the shell he found a date carved.

"I can't read it," mourned Sunny aloud. "But I guess you're not Grandpa's turtle, 'cause you haven't any initials on you. I wish you'd put your head out, just once."

But, though he put the turtle gently on the ground again and kept very still for at least five minutes, the queer, narrow little head stayed safely in its shell house. The turtle did not run away.

"Guess he thinks I'll catch him if he runs," thought Sunny. "I'd like to keep

him if he was little. Jimmie says little turtles are nice to keep in the garden. Maybe I can find one on the way back, and build him a little house under Grandma's rose bushes."

Sunny went on, and soon he was sure that he was coming to the place where he had seen his kite fall. To be sure, the inside of the woods looked very different from the outside, and Sunny began to understand why he and Grandfather had not found the bonds as easily as they had hoped to. Still, he felt he was "getting warm" as they say in the games of seeking, and he began to look about him closely.

"It was right here—" His apple fell out of his blouse and he stooped to pick it up. He sprang up with a shriek and ran screaming toward an opening in the woods.

"It was a snake—a great, big, nasty, bitey snake!" he sobbed. "I put my ~~hand~~ right on it—all slippery and cold!"

He looked back—was it a snake after all? What was that curved black thing that lay there so quietly at the foot of a tree?

Then Sunny Boy did a very brave thing indeed. He was all alone, remember, and there was no one to laugh at him had he gone on home believing that he had touched a snake. But he liked to be very sure in his own mind, and he went back, cautiously and ready to run if a twig snapped, but back, nevertheless, to the place where he thought he had seen the snake. Any one, you know, may be frightened, but to face the fear and see if it is an afraid thought, or something really scary—that takes a truly brave person. And always afterward Sunny Boy was to be glad that he had had the courage to go back and see.

For his snake was only an old twisted tree root, after all!

“But I guess it’s dinner time, an’ I can come again an’ look for the bonds,” he told a

chipmunk. "Maybe Jimmie will come tomorrow and help hunt."

This time Sunny Boy crossed the stone crossing without getting either foot wet and he was half way up to the house when he saw Peter and Paul standing hitched to the fence. They had been hauling the tomato plants for Jimmie and Grandpa, who was always kind to the farm animals, had ordered them to be unharnessed and tied in the shade while the plants were being set out.

"No horse likes to be anchored to a wagon when 't isn't necessary," said kind Grandpa.

"Jimmie's always saying he will let me ride Peter," grumbled Sunny Boy, looking very little as he stood by the fence, fumbling with the strap that tied Peter fast. "Pretty soon we'll be going home, Mother says, and I won't ever learn to ride."

Sunny's busy, mischievous fingers had untied the strap as he talked, and now Peter could have walked away to the barn and his

dinner, had he only known it. He didn't though, and so he was very much surprised to feel little feet digging into him as Sunny Boy scrambled desperately to get on his back. Peter and Paul were fat and slow or they never would have stood the antics of Sunny as that small person, clinging to Peter's mane, and using Paul as a kind of stepladder, pushed and pulled and climbed till he found himself where he wished to be—on Peter's broad back.

"Gee, you're a tall horse!" he observed, gathering the halter strap in one hand as he had seen Jimmie take the reins. "Oh, there's what you ought to have on—I didn't see it."

The bridles and reins lay on the ground where Jimmie had dropped them when he had unharnessed the horses from the wagon. But Sunny Boy was not minded to get down after such a trifle—he had had too much trouble to secure his present seat.

"Gid-ap!" he said loudly, and jerked the halter strap.

Over in the field, Jimmie straightened an aching young back and gazed in amazement.

"Say—hey, Sunny—Sunny Horton! Get off that horse—do you hear me?" he shouted.

Sunny Boy heard. He turned and grinned impishly. He delighted to plague Jimmie, and he was having fun guiding Peter.

Then Jimmie rather lost his head. Had he kept still, Peter would probably have ambled gently about the meadow, perhaps turned into the road that led to the house and barn, and Sunny's adventure might have been a very mild one. But Jimmie was frightened, and in his fear he did the one thing that could have brought about what he feared. He leaped the fence and came running toward the horse.

"Gid-ap, Peter! Go 'long! Hurry!"

Sunny slapped the strap smartly across old Peter's neck.

That easy-going horse was not used to such treatment, and he broke into a trot. Jimmie began to shout and wave his arms. Then Peter broke into a gallop, taking great, long easy strides that seemed to cover miles of ground to Sunny's excited eyes.

"You kind of bump!" he gasped, as the horse galloped on. "I wonder—will—I—fall off!"

Peter snorted. He had forgotten how it felt to be running free, and perhaps he was pretending he was a young colt again. He paid no more attention to the small boy on his back than if Sunny Boy had been a fly.

Around and around the field they tore. Jimmie's shouts had brought Grandpa, and together the two watched in terrible anxiety.

"T'd get on Paul and chase 'em, but Peter can outrun him any day!" Jimmie almost

sobbed. "Say! I know what will do it. You wait, sir."

He ran up to the barn and came back with a peck measure of corn. Paul saw the long yellow ears and whinnied with pleasure.

"You don't get any," Jimmie informed him. "Lucky they hadn't had their dinner," he said to Grandpa. He stood out from the fence and rattled the measure invitingly, and whistled.

Now Peter was not a colt, however much he might enjoy pretending, and he was getting tired of his gallop. Also he was hungry, and he had heard Paul whinny. So when Jimmie whistled, the old, familiar whistle he always gave when he came in the barn at feeding time, Peter turned and stared. Yes, there he stood, down at the other end of the field, and yes, he had corn with him.

Peter slowed down to a gentle run, then to a half trot, and finally came walking at

his usual gentle gait straight up to Jimmie and Grandpa.

"Sunny, Sunny, what will you do next?" groaned Grandpa, lifting him down. "I hope your mother didn't see this—she would be frightened to death."

"It didn't hurt me," urged Sunny Boy, beginning to wonder if he had done wrong. "I is bumped a little, but I wasn't afraid, Grandpa. Was Jimmie?"

"You young imp!" Jimmie swooped down upon him and hugged him so hard Sunny squirmed uneasily. "You bet I was scared! I thought every minute you'd tumble off. And now do you want to ride up to the barn with me, or have you had enough?"

"I'll ride with you," said Sunny firmly.

CHAPTER XV.

SUNNY'S GOOD LUCK

"**T**HERE!" Grandma, a pretty picture in her white dress that matched her white hair, closed the side door. "Now we're really started."

She and Grandpa and Mother and Sunny Boy were going for their long-talked-of picnic in the woods. Araminta had the day for a holiday and had gone merrily off to town to buy herself a new frock. Sunny had wanted Jimmie to come to the picnic, but Jimmie, too, was away. He had gone down to the city to sell hay for Grandpa. So it happened that just the four were to spend the day in the woods.

"What we'll do without you, Sunny,"

said Grandpa, as they walked ahead, "I'm sure I don't know."

"But I'll send you some of the sand," urged Sunny cheerfully. "And a seashell, Grandpa."

For this was Aunt Bessie's plan. She had written Mrs. Horton that she and a friend, a teacher, had taken a cottage at the seashore for the month of August, and they wanted Sunny Boy and his mother to come and spend that month with them. The cottage was near enough to the city for Mr. Horton to go down every night and stay with them.

"And two weeks from to-day," Mrs. Horton had told Sunny Boy as he brushed his hair that morning, "you will be going down to the beach with a tin pail and shovel I expect, to play in the sand."

Grandpa, carrying two boxes of lunch and a little camp chair that folded up—because Grandma had aches in her joints if she tried

to sit on the ground—smiled down at his grandson.

"Oh, well, we shall just have to have as much fun as we can while you're here," he said firmly. "Let's have a perfectly fine picnic with all the sandwiches we can eat to-day."

"Yes," agreed Sunny enthusiastically. "Let's."

"Sunny, what have you found there?" asked Grandpa after a while.

"It's a bird," said Sunny pitifully. "A poor, little dead bird, Grandpa. See?"

He brought back the little feathered body he had found at the foot of a tall oak tree, and showed them.

"It's a baby robin," said Grandma, touching the little thing gently. "It must have fallen out of the nest. Don't grieve, lambie, nothing can hurt the little bird now."

"I want to bury it," insisted Sunny, tears

running down his face. "I don't want to leave it on the ground, Grandma."

"All right, you shall bury it," said Grandpa soothingly. "I'll help you. Mother, you and Olive walk along slowly and we'll catch up to you."

So Grandma and Sunny's mother walked ahead, and Grandpa began to help Sunny bury the baby robin.

First, they found a wide, smooth green leaf that grew in the woods and wrapped this about the dead bird and fastened it with the sharp little thorns that grew on another plant and which were every bit as good as pins.

"Now you gather the prettiest fern leaves you can find," directed Grandpa. "And I'll dig him a little grave."

When Sunny Boy came back with his hands full of soft fern leaves, Grandpa had a little square hollowed out in the earth, under a Jack in the Pulpit plant.

"We'll line it with ferns, so," he said, arranging the leaves Sunny Boy brought him, "and then we'll put the bird in so, and cover him up carefully. There! Now we'll leave him in his nice, green bed, dear, and not be sorry for him any more.

"I see Bruce just ahead. Grandma and Mother must be near."

They came up to them in a minute, and Sunny Boy suddenly discovered that he was hungry.

"But it isn't time for lunch yet, precious. Take this apple and try to wait a little longer, do," said his mother.

"Feels like a thunderstorm," declared Grandma, sitting down on her camp-stool to get her breath after the walk. "Well, Bruce will tell us in time, won't you, old fellow?"

"How?" asked Sunny curiously.

"He's afraid of thunder," explained Grandma. "Years ago when he was a



young dog he was out hunting rabbits or squirrels one summer night and a big thunderstorm came up. We always think he must have seen a tree struck, or been stunned by a flash, for he came home dripping and shivering. And ever since—though that was a long time ago—he begins to shake and wants to hide whenever he hears thunder.”

The woods did not seem dark and still, now that Sunny had company with him, and he took Grandpa over to the place where he and Daddy had gone fishing. They decided not to try to catch any fish that day, but Sunny took off his shoes and stockings and went wading.

When he came out, and had his shoes and stockings on again, Mrs. Horton spread a white cloth on a flat rock and she and Grandma began to get the lunch ready.

“Sunny, which would you rather have,” Grandpa asked him, “white cake or black cake?”

"White, I guess," said Sunny. "Or no—chocolate, I think."

"Well, well, if that isn't lucky!" cried Grandpa, pretending to be much relieved. "Grandma has put in both kinds!"

Indeed there were all kinds of goodies in those boxes—chicken and ham sandwiches, eggs, potato salad, white cake and black, a vacuum bottle of cold milk for Sunny and one of hot coffee for the others.

"There's a spider!" shouted Sunny Boy as they sat down to eat. "Look, Grandpa, he going right into the cake."

"Oh, spiders and ants and little creatures like that like to come to a picnic," answered Grandpa, scooping up the spider on a bit of cardboard and putting him down carefully on a bush near by. "Mr. Spider'll go home to-night and tell the folks all about the little boy he saw in the woods to-day with his mother and his grandmother and his grandfather having a picnic. And little Sallie

Spider will say, 'What were they eating, Daddy? Did you bring me any?' "

"I'll sprinkle crumbs for him to get afterward," planned Sunny. "The fishes had them last time, and now it is Mr. Spider's turn."

Presently, when no one could eat another bite, Mother and Grandmother folded up the cloth and put the sandwiches left over in one box. All the odds and ends were put down on a paper plate for Bruce to eat, and then Grandpa dug a hole in the ground and he and Sunny Boy buried the papers out of sight.

"For I won't let any one build a fire in my woods in July when we're needing rain so badly and every stick is like tinder," said Grandpa sturdily. "And we won't leave a messy picnic ground, even if it is our own, shall we?"

Mrs. Horton had her knitting, and she and Grandma sat and worked and talked quietly

while Grandpa and Sunny Boy went off together to try to find a sassafras bush. Just as they had found one and Grandpa had taken out his knife to cut a twig for Sunny to taste, Bruce ran into him and nearly knocked him down.

"Grandpa! Grandpa! Something's the matter with Bruce! Is he sick?" Sunny Boy was a little frightened at the strange way the dog acted. "Look at him! He's trying to walk on me."

"He hears thunder," said Grandpa quietly. "He's trying to get you to hide him. Funny, I haven't heard a rumble. But you can trust Bruce. He never fails to tell us. We must hurry and get Mother and Grandma back to the house before it rains."

They walked back as fast as they could to where they had left the others, and found Mrs. Horton folding up her knitting.

"We thought we heard thunder," she said,

as they came up to her. "I think it is clouding up, too. Why how funny Bruce acts! Is he sick?"

"He's trying to tell us a storm is coming," replied Grandpa. "There, there, Bruce, don't be so silly. We're going home, and you can hide under the barn floor and never even see the lightning."

The sun, which had been shining down through the trees, had gone under a cloud, and the branches about them began to rustle as the wind swayed them.

"I'm afraid we'll have a heavy storm," said Grandma anxiously. "We have had such a long dry spell and it's been so hot. I'd hate to be caught among these trees in a heavy wind."

"Don't worry, Mother," replied Grandpa. "We'll be home before the first drops come. Shall I carry you, Sunny?"

Sunny, who was running to keep up with them, shook his head. He did not want to

be carried like a baby. Soon it grew darker and darker and the wind began to blow in earnest. He pressed closer to Grandpa.

"Don't be afraid," said Grandpa kindly. "We'll be out of the woods in another minute and then we'll scoot across the brook and be home."

He put out a hand to help Grandmother, when with a tremendous blast a gust of wind made them all stop to catch their breath. They saw it bend a tree at the edge of the clearing and heard the tree snap loudly as it broke and fell across the path. Bruce howled—he was nervous, poor animal.

"Mercy!" gasped Grandma. "I said we'd have a bad storm. There! I felt a raindrop. My father always said the worst was over when the rain began."

They hurried on, anxious not to get wet, and Sunny Boy was the first to reach the fallen tree.

"We have to go over it," he shouted back, and began to scramble up, holding on to the branches.

"Grandpa," they heard him scream a moment later. "Hurry! Come quick! Here's my kite! The Lib'ty Bonds kite!"

Sure enough, there it was, just as it had caught in the tree—the missing kite. And still pasted to the strips of wood were Grandpa's two five-hundred-dollar Liberty Bonds!

"No wonder we couldn't find 'em!" cried Sunny Boy, dancing with excitement. "I knew I saw it fall in a tree! Won't Daddy be glad!"

"We're all glad," declared Mother, kissing him warmly. "Isn't it just wonderful to think that the same little boy who lost the bonds should also find them?"

"It's been a lucky picnic, surely," said Grandpa. "After a hard rain those bonds wouldn't have been worth much to any one."

"Well, they won't be worth much now if we all stand here and get soaked," announced Grandma practically.

At that they all took hold of hands and ran across the meadow, over the bridge of stones, and up to the porch. And the moment they were safely under shelter, how the rain did pour down! Just as if, Sunny said, it had been waiting for them to get home before it showed what it really could do.

"Mother," asked Sunny Boy that night, as he sat on the foot-board of the bed in his blue pajamas and watched her brush her hair. They were all tired after the excitement of the picnic and the finding of the bonds, and every one was going to bed at Sunny's bed time, even Grandpa. "Mother, will I take my sand-box to the seashore?"

"Oh, no, precious," she assured him. "Why you'll have a whole beach of sand to play in. And the bathing suit I bought for

you to wear here and which you haven't had on because the brook water is so cold! Perhaps Daddy will teach you to swim."

"Yes," agreed Sunny Boy absently. And he tumbled back on the pillows, thinking about the seashore and the ocean which he had never seen.

It was not very long after the picnic that Mother and Sunny Boy left Brookside and went to visit Aunt Bessie in her white cottage that faced the ocean. And if you want to hear about the good times Sunny Boy had there and what he thought the waves were saying to him when he got up in the night to listen, you'll have to read "SUNNY BOY AT THE SEASHORE"

THE END

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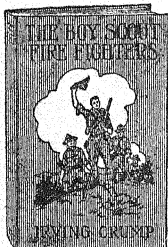
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